

Emperors and Historiography

COLLECTED ESSAYS ON
THE LITERATURE OF
THE ROMAN EMPIRE
BY DANIËL DEN HENGST

Introduced and Edited by

D.W.P. BURGERSDIJK
& J.A. VAN WAARDEN

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K.M. Coleman
I.J.F. de Jong
P.H. Schrijvers

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAWM	<i>Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Mainz</i>
AA	<i>Antike und Abendland</i>
AClass	<i>Acta Classica</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
AncSoc	<i>Ancient Society</i>
AntTard	<i>Antiquité Tardive</i>
BHAC	<i>Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
BMCR	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i>
CC	<i>Classica Cracoviensia</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiastorum Latinorum</i>
DCG	<i>Didactica Classica Gandensia</i>
FGrHist	<i>Fragmenta Graecorum Historicorum</i>
GGH	<i>Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen</i>
HRR	<i>Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
LLC	<i>Literary and Linguistic Computing</i>
LRB	<i>London Review of Books</i>
MAI	<i>Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
MD	<i>Materiali e Discussioni</i>
MEFRA	<i>Mélanges de l'école française de Rome</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germanicae Historica</i>
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
MPhL	<i>Museum Philologum Londiniense</i>
NJAB	<i>Neue Jahrbücher für antike und deutsche Bildung</i>
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PIR	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i>
PP	<i>La Parola del Passato</i>
RE	<i>Pauly's Realencyklopädie</i>

REL	<i>Revue des Études Latines</i>
RH	<i>Revue historique</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
SBAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i>
SHAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
SCO	<i>Studi Classici e Orientali</i>
SJ	<i>Saalburg Jahrbuch</i>
SO	<i>Symbolae Osloenses</i>
ST	<i>Studi Tardoantichi</i>
TAPhA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
ThLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>
T&Mbyz	<i>Travaux et mémoires du centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines</i>
VChr	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WJA	<i>Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft</i>
WKPh	<i>Wochenschrift für Klassische Philologie</i>
WSt	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
WZUR	<i>Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock</i>
YCIS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

PREFACE

This book contains the scholarly articles about Latin historiography by Daniël den Hengst, professor emeritus of Latin language and literature at the University of Amsterdam. As a discerning student of Latin prose from the classical period (Cicero) to the end of pagan antiquity (Ammianus Marcellinus), Professor Den Hengst has created a remarkably homogeneous oeuvre. His articles on historiography are here for the first time presented to the public in one volume. The focus is on imperial prose from the first to the fourth century, which led the editors to give the book the title *Emperors and Historiography*, with a variation on Ronald Syme's *Emperors and Biography* (1971), a book which was very important during the earlier years of Den Hengst's scholarly career.

Born (1939) and educated in The Hague, Den Hengst studied Classics at the Free University of Amsterdam (1957-1965), where he showed a marked interest in early Christianity and Late Antiquity, influenced above all by Prof. J.J. Thierry. As a post-graduate student he started to write a dissertation on Salvian of Marseilles. This project remained unfinished (actually, it is still one of his *desiderata*) because he became engrossed in his job as a secondary school teacher. Throughout his life one of his main concerns has been the promotion of classics in secondary education.

A few years later (1973) he started his academic career, this time at the University of Amsterdam, which he still serves today. The department on the Singel, and, from the beginning of the eighties, the beloved Oude Turfmarkt in the historical centre of Amsterdam, became his professional habitat. There he wrote his doctoral thesis about the prefaces in the *Historia Augusta* under the supervision of Prof. A.D. Leeman (1981).

Although he jokingly refers, with Syme, to the *Historia Augusta* as a 'morass', Den Hengst has always stayed loyal to *Historia Augusta* studies. The second section of the present book is devoted to his contributions in this area, especially the papers presented at the *Historia Augusta Colloquia*, which he has attended ever since finishing his PhD thesis. After Sir Ronald Syme had advocated that a literary (not exclusively

historical) approach should be the main concern of *Historia Augusta* studies, Den Hengst took the lead in concentrating on literary aspects, which he underpinned with philological acumen. His approach has won the acclaim of the scholars in the field.

After a handful of studies about prose authors from the early principate (Suetonius, Pliny the Younger), Den Hengst started work on a commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res gestae*, as a continuation of the series which was begun by P. de Jonge. This project, which is the joint effort of Den Hengst with the Latinist J. den Boeft and the ancient historians H.C. Teitler and (from book 23 onwards) also J.W. Drijvers, is proceeding apace. Since 1987 seven volumes have appeared (books 20–26), and the *quadriga* hopes to finish the entire project within the next ten years, *si vita suppeditaverit*.¹ The pioneering project is now widely recognized as a high point in the research of late antique historiography.

In addition to this joint undertaking, Den Hengst has continued to produce his own individual studies, especially for conferences or to contribute to collections of articles. His admiration for Ammianus' style and historiographical achievement is as poised as it is contagious. Whereas the articles on the *Historia Augusta* are concerned with the history of the second and third centuries (apart from the *Umwelt* of the *Historia's* presumed author in the later fourth century), Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res gestae* took Den Hengst to the history of the fourth century. These diverse interests have produced a coherent collection of articles about late antique historiographical prose. Those on Ammianus take up the third section of the present volume.

The reader is bound to notice when reading Den Hengst, that Cicero is never far from his mind. Significantly, he chose to mark the beginning of his professorship (1996) with an inaugural address in which he discussed ideas about historiography in the works of Cicero, who never wrote history himself. When one considers Den Hengst's oeuvre in its entirety, it becomes apparent how well he has succeeded in using Cicero's works – along with the Auctor ad Herennium and Quintilian – to elucidate later historians, such as Livy, the author of the *Historia Augusta* and Ammianus Marcellinus. Hence, Cicero figures prominently in the first section of this book, which contains articles about historiography in republican times and the early principate, such as Cicero's

¹ In chapter 27 Den Hengst reveals something about the working method on the project (see particularly the sections 'The Ammianus Project' and 'Superstitio').

perception of history in *De Oratore*, Livy's preface to his *Ab Urbe Condita*, and Suetonius' imperial biographies.

What has been said so far might obscure the fact that Latin poetry is just as important to Prof. Den Hengst as Latin prose. He has written articles about, e.g., Catullus, Horace and Ovid, and in his lectures he never failed to impress his students with his observations on poetic language, where he showed a soft spot for Juvenal. This, however, falls outside the scope of the present volume. The loss is somewhat compensated – we hope – by articles about the use of Virgil in the *Historia Augusta* and by Ammianus (as well as the latter's satirical models), and of Den Hengst's assessment of the poetic trifles in the *vita Opili Macrini* in the *Historia Augusta*.

Two other distinctive traits of Den Hengst as a Latinist might escape the interested scholars abroad. First of all – already briefly hinted at above – the numerous contributions which he made to classics in secondary education in the Netherlands: his introductions and annotations of Latin authors in textbooks, his involvement in the national examinations, and his continuous efforts with regard to post-graduate courses for teachers, including a period of ten years (1988–98) as editor-in-chief of the journal for Dutch classicists, *Lampas*. Den Hengst has always looked back with pleasure to the time when he taught at a grammar school, where he undoubtedly acquired his marvellous teaching skills which so many generations of academic students have enjoyed. After his retirement he did not hesitate, whenever he was asked, to go back to teaching at secondary school level, thus enjoying again the contact with youthful learners (although he found it difficult to hide a certain disappointment as to their skills ...).

Not only the young have benefited from Den Hengst's capacity as an interpreter of classical literature. His beautiful style in the Dutch language is evident in his translation of Suetonius' biographies (the first three of them had already appeared in 1968). The translation has been reprinted time and again, since it was published in 1996. After several other translations (tragedies by Seneca and Pliny's *Panegyricus*), Den Hengst is presently working on the first Dutch rendering of Ammianus' complete works.

The editors of this volume, one a former student, the other a one-time fellow student, are very grateful for the diligent and expert supervision which he gave them recently during the writing of their PhD theses. In the last phase of this process, not long before Den Hengst's *ius promovendi* expired, they decided to prepare this volume with collected

papers from three decades as a tribute to his person and his scholarship. (With characteristic modesty, Den Hengst approved of the undertaking only after some hesitation.) They are confident that it will prove valuable to the study of antiquity, the later centuries in particular.

Ines van de Wetering translated the articles originally published in Dutch into English. Hanna Schreuders, who took responsibility for the hard job of computerizing and fashioning the text, Piet Schreuders who assisted with the lay-out, and Peter Burgersdijk, who composed the *indices*, invested much time and energy to produce the book. Finally a word of thanks to the institutions which contributed financially towards the realization of this volume: the Association of Classical Teachers in the Netherlands (vcn), the University of Amsterdam and its Department of Latin, and the publisher Brill in Leiden. We also thank the board of *Mnemosyne* Supplements for having welcomed our proposal to include the collected papers in the series, and the publishing companies which printed the original articles for the rights to reproduce the articles in this volume.²

Diederik Burgersdijk
Joop van Waarden

² The articles are reproduced here in the form in which they were originally published, apart from alterations demanded by lay-out and internal consistency. Translations, if present, of passages in Latin or Greek have been put in footnotes. The author himself made some minor changes in the articles that have been translated from the Dutch. The volume comes with two bibliographies, one of Daniël den Hengst's oeuvre, and another which is a combination of the bibliographies with which the original articles were provided. In the latter, as well as in the footnotes, some references to recent literature have been added by the author as well as by the editors for the convenience of the reader.

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I

PROSE OF THE LATE REPUBLIC AND EARLY EMPIRE

CHAPTER ONE

CICERO AND HISTORY

Cicero's dialogue *The Laws* is set in his place of birth Arpinum. The participants in the conversation are Cicero himself, his brother Quintus and his great friend Atticus. On a walk they pass by an oak tree which Atticus thinks he knows from a poem, written by Cicero at some earlier time about his fellow townsman Marius.¹ An eagle had alighted from this oak tree, had killed a snake and thereupon had flown eastwards, which was interpreted by Marius as a good omen.

Then the following discussion ensues (the passage is here paraphrased, not translated): (Atticus): 'I would like to hear from the poet himself whether his verses planted this oak, or whether he knows this story from the tradition.' (Cicero): 'I am prepared to answer on condition that you, Atticus, tell me first whether it is true that close to your house in Rome king Romulus, after his death, appeared to Julius Proculus and told him that he was a god. And is it also true that close to your house in Athens the nymph Orithyia was snatched away by the Northwind?' (Atticus): 'Why do you ask?' (Cicero): 'To prevent you from asking unduly precise questions about this type of story.' (Atticus): 'Yet there are quite a few people who, at more than one point in your poem, wonder whether it is true or invented, and who think that you should stick to the facts with regard to a subject from such a recent past.' (Cicero): 'I would not like to come across as a liar, but I do think that such people are naïve if they demand from a poet the same sort of truth as from a witness in court. Of course, they also believe that king Numa really spoke with the nymph Egeria?' At this point Cicero's brother Quintus interrupts and draws the conclusion that according to Cicero, there are different rules for poetry and for historiography. Cicero confirms this by saying that history is concerned with the truth (*veritas*), whereas a poem is written to entertain or, to put it in a more modern way, to provide aesthetic pleasure (*delectatio*).² Atticus uses the opportunity to remind Cicero that many Romans want him to write a history, so that they can catch up with the Greeks in this field as well. Cicero answers

1 Part of the lost poem is quoted by Cicero in *Div.* 1.106.

2 On the possible link between *delectatio* and fictional stories (*fabulae*) see Brink 1971, 352-3.

that he cannot possibly grant this request. He was able to write his other works in his spare time, but historical research demands both time and concentration, and he has neither.

This casual conversation raises a number of themes which I want to examine more closely, and which I sum up under the title *Cicero and History*.³ They are the following:

1. Cicero's knowledge of and interest in history;
2. The relationship between fact and fiction, truth and falsehood in a historical narrative;
3. The question as to what position one should take up with regard to the distant past, in this case the era of the kings in Rome, which is evoked here by the names of Romulus and Numa.

First of all Cicero's interest in history. Especially the letters to Atticus show how great and how detailed Cicero's knowledge of the history of Rome was.⁴ In these letters he mostly refers to historical data he needs, either as precedents, when he is preparing court cases, or as material for the historical background against which his dialogues are set. But Cicero also knew the selfless curiosity, essential for a historian. He discusses this in the fifth book of his work *On the Ends of Good and Evil*, in which the Academic philosopher Piso argues that the thirst for knowledge is innate in human beings as part of their endeavour to develop fully.⁵ According to Piso, this is what the Sirenes gambled on when they lured Odysseus with a song in which they promised him knowledge. Piso does not see the need to prove this contention. Everyone is surely aware of his own fascination with the secrets of nature and of history, which we want to investigate down to the smallest detail. In passing he comments: 'Of course I know (*nec vero sum nescius*) that history has its uses', but this is obviously not his prime concern. For Cicero this thirst for knowledge is more than just Academic doctrine. Several times he showed this keen nose, for instance when, as a young magistrate, he detected and uncovered the overgrown tomb of the great physicist Archimedes near Syracuse. With legitimate pride he states that the great city of Syracuse, in the past a centre of scholarship, had to find out from a man from Arpinum where the grave of her famous townsman was

³ The most important studies about this subject are: Freund 1881; Leeman 1963, 168–81 ('The Styles of Historical Writing in the Late Republic'); Petzold 1972; Rawson 1972.

⁴ A good survey can be found in Rambaud 1953, specifically 25–35.

⁵ Cic. Fin. 5.51 *ipsi enim quaeramus a nobis ... quid historia delectet, quam solemus persequi usque ad extremum*.

situated.⁶ The same keen interest regarding the past causes him, as soon as he arrives in Metapontum, to go to the house where Pythagoras died. And when he visits what was once the lecture-room of Carneades in Athens, he writes that he felt as if he saw and heard the philosopher (*Fin.* 5.4).

Whenever Cicero needs historical information for practical reasons, be it for a speech or to embellish a dialogue, he goes in pursuit with great persistence, in the happy knowledge that he can always appeal to Atticus, who had a huge library and was himself the author of a chronological treatise. Moreover, he does not shy away from technical problems of the kind which would make a prosopographer sit up, whilst the layman would need tremendous perseverance. Was Gaius Fannius, son of Marcus, really the consul of 122 and a contemporary of Gaius Fannius, son of Gaius, and was the latter a historian, and son-in-law of Laelius? Which ten senators formed the delegation, sent to Mummius in Corinth in 146? When one tries to follow the discussion about problems of this kind, one has to come to the conclusion that Cicero fully deserves the characterization 'Forscher', given to him in a recent thesis (Fleck 1993, 264).

Cicero did not only engage in practical historical research, his work also contains theoretical views on historiography. I refer, of course, to the famous passage in the second book of *De oratore*. It is a *dulce periculum* for me to add a few footnotes to the commentary on this passage of my predecessors Leeman and Pinkster, and to the studies dedicated to this subject by Leeman. Antonius, who introduces the subject of historiography in *De oratore*, has postulated that an orator, well versed in judicial and political rhetoric, will be able to apply this skill to other areas as well, for instance to panegyric and historiography, because the rules, which apply to these literary forms, are self-evident and do not require specialist knowledge. 'Everybody knows,' says Antonius, 'that the first law of history is not daring to say anything false; that the second is daring to say everything that is true; that there should be no suggestion of partiality, none of animosity when you write. These foundations are, of course, familiar to everyone. The actual superstructure is a matter of content and words.' Thus far the quotation (the translation is taken from May/Wisse 2001, 139-140). The commandment that historians should stick to the truth (*veritas*) is a truism, to which all historians in antiquity pay at least

⁶ *Tusc.* 5.66 *ita nobilissima Graeciae civitas, quondam et doctissima, sui civis unius acutissimi monumentum ignorasset, nisi ab homine Arpinati didicisset.*

lip service. The historian builds his work on this foundation.

As we have seen, Cicero makes a distinction between material or content, and articulation or style. He had clear-cut ideas about the appropriate style for a work of history, on which I will not elaborate here. Shortly after the publication of the above-mentioned commentary of Leeman and Pinkster, the English Latinist Woodman wrote a controversial study *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (1988), which deals with Cicero's demand for *veritas* and the material of the historical narrative. In this study Woodman has attempted to put the importance of the demand for *veritas* in perspective, in two ways. Firstly, in his opinion *veritas* plays a very minor part in the thinking of Cicero, who is only concerned with the exposition regarding material and style of the superstructure or *exaedificatio*. In my opinion Leeman has sufficiently refuted this point; I will therefore ignore it (see also Leeman 1989). Just as important is Woodman's proposition that the concept of truth derives its content from the following words, that the author should avoid any suspicion of bias. According to Woodman *veritas* is only relevant with regard to the way in which the historian relates to his characters. In his opinion this concept has nothing to do with truth in the sense of factual correctness. He summarizes this part of his argument as follows: 'I hope that in this section I have succeeded in demonstrating that Antonius' remarks on the laws of historiography are relatively unimportant in the context of the argument, and, second, that the truth required by those laws is quite different from what we today might call 'historical truth'. In a footnote he adds: 'The ancients lacked our concept of historical truth' (Woodman 1988, 83 and n. 42).

It is certainly true that not only in this passage of Cicero, but also in the well known prefaces of Sallust, Livy and Tacitus *veritas* denotes the attitude of the historian towards his characters and is thus rendered best with 'lack of bias' or 'impartiality'. This does not mean that in the context of historiography *veritas* always has this meaning in Cicero; he also uses it with the meaning, which the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines as 'that which is in accordance with fact, the truth.' To prove this it will suffice if I remind you of the almost hymnic eulogy of history, also in the second book of *De oratore*, where Cicero calls her *magistra vitae* 'teacher of life' and *lux veritatis* 'light (or rather illumination) of the truth.'⁷ Here *veritas* means factual truth, and the two previously mentioned aspects of the study of history, the usefulness and the fulfilment

⁷ *De orat.* 2.36 *historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vitae memoria, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia nisi oratoris immortalitati commendatur?*

of the desire for knowledge, are linked. When studying the meaning of *veritas* in the passage about historiography in *De oratore* one should not forget that in his choice of metaphors Cicero was patently influenced by Greek treatises about historiography,⁸ in which the Greek equivalent ἀλήθεια plays as central a part as *veritas*. Even more explicitly than in the above cited passage in Cicero is ἀλήθεια mentioned as the aim of historical research by Thucydides and Polybius, to mention here only two giants. So much for the two aspects of the essential requirement of *veritas*.

Antonius then goes on to say that the superstructure of a historical narrative should be built on this basis. With regard to the material he mentions the following components: the setting in time and space, the actions, together with the considerations by which they are caused plus their consequences, in addition to which the historian should express his personal judgement, and, finally, the portrayal of the most important characters with their distinctive qualities and their past history. Both in this respect and with regard to the style a well educated orator (we would say an erudite and literary person) is needed to mould the bare facts into a story which is stylistically of a high level and which will captivate the reader, because not only are the events portrayed in a lively manner, they are also put in a meaningful context. According to Antonius (and Atticus repeats it after him in *The Laws*) Rome has suffered a dearth of authors able to transform facts into literature (if I may be permitted to use this anachronistic term). So far the Roman historians had been cataloguers, chroniclers, not artists breathing life into facts.

Quintilian explains most clearly in book eight of his magnificent handbook on rhetoric, the *Institutio oratoria*, what is meant by breathing life into facts: 'A person who relates that a city has been captured sums up everything that goes with such a disaster, but his statement does not reach the accompanying emotions. However, if you lay bare the actual meaning of this statement, the sea of flames above the houses and temples will become visible as well as audible, as will the clash of collapsing houses, the cries from several sides, merging into one wail, and the hesitant attempts to flee, the last embraces, the tears of women and children', and in this vein Quintilian continues until he finishes as follows: 'Although this one word 'captured' contains all this, nevertheless the whole is less than the combined details (*minus est totum quam omnia*), in other words, here the whole is less than the sum of the parts'

⁸ Cf. Lucianus *Hist. Conscr.* 33. See also Leeman/Pinkster/Nelson 1985, 267.

(Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.67-70). Similarly, on the basis that, for argument's sake, Camillus addressed the people, a real speech can be created and the bare facts of a military victory of the Romans can be expanded into the description of a battle. To achieve this the author has to resort to his imaginative powers as well as his empathy, and ask himself what in any given situation would be probable and plausible.

We are now close to the distinction made by Aristotle in his *Poetics* between history and poetry (Arist. *Poet.* 9, 1451b): 'It is not the specific task of the poet to speak about events which have taken place, but about things of such a nature that they could happen, I mean about that which is possible according to probability or necessity.' I think it is safe to say that in Cicero's view one can only speak of proper, meaning literarily worthwhile, historical writing if history, meaning the events which have taken place, is complemented by poetry, that, which will have taken place according to probability or necessity.

Thus, according to Cicero, the facts have to be manipulated in order to produce a history worthy of that name. The material, which constitutes the superstructure or *exaedificatio*, the battle, the description of the area, the speech, the capture of the city, takes up an intermediary position between source material and a totally fictitious narrative. Quintilian's way of expressing himself in the earlier quoted passage is revealing. His literal words are: 'When you open, lay bare what lies hidden within that one word 'captured'.' This means, you don't make something up *ex nihilo*, you only draw the conclusion from the available data. In other words, the facts contain the details; all the historian has to do is put them into words.

A modern historian, as much as his classical predecessor, strives to arrange the data, on which he bases his narrative, in a meaningful and graphic way for the sake of the reader. There is, however, an important difference: the modern, responsible historian knows that he is duty-bound to disclose the origin of his data, in other words to reveal his sources and, in case of a discrepancy, to weigh them up against each other, whereas classical historians on the whole only mention their sources when they intend to challenge them. Their reticence is understandable, for in this way they are able to hide to what degree they are using their imagination. Nevertheless, although modern historians reveal more of themselves than their predecessors, they, too, make a considerable, personal, contribution to their narrative. As an example I use a passage from a historian whom I admire: Otto Seeck presents in his *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* a continuous story; in an

Anhang he accounts for every paragraph in footnotes, with acknowledgement of his sources and, when necessary, with a discussion of the controversial issues (Seeck 1966 (=1992²), IV 305). One can see him cross the river of events, striding, not jumping, from one ice floe to the next. And yet Seeck himself is present on every page arranging and creating. For example, he describes the first appearance as emperor of Julian the Apostate after the death of his predecessor Constantius in the following way, basing himself on a large number of contemporary sources (whilst going along I indicate Seeck's interventions). 'Während die Leiche des verstorbenen Kaisers, mit allem Prunk, die seiner Würde gebührte (Seeck), Kleinasien durchzog, um in die Stadt seines Vaters feierlich beigesetzt zu werden, bemächtigte sich Julian mit der entschlossenen Hurtigkeit (energy), die ihm eigen war (Seeck), seiner Hinterlassenschaft. Schon am 11. Dezember 361 zog er, von der Bevölkerung festlich empfangen, in Constantinopel ein und ernannte sogleich seinen väterlichen Freund (Seeck), den heidnischen Philosophen Salutius (Seeck), den er hier wiederfand, nachdem er sich in Gallien von ihm hatte trennen müssen, zum Praefecten des Orients. Die Pflichten, welche ihm die offizielle Trauer um den Verwandten und Erblasser auferlegte (Seeck), erfüllte er mit absichtsvoller Ostentation (Seeck), aber dass er nicht als Fortsetzer zu regieren gedenke, wusste man längst im ganzen Reiche (Seeck).' Even a conscientious historian like Seeck does not let the facts speak for themselves, he arranges them, with backward and forward glances, and makes value judgements, exactly as Cicero demanded from the historian. Before returning to him, one more general remark to conclude this section on Cicero's theoretical views. According to Woodman the concept of 'historic truth' did not exist for classical historians; one should read their work primarily as an exercise in rhetoric, which contains more information about their own pre-occupations than about the period they describe.

It is no accident that Woodman's study was published in 1988, because in the seventies and eighties a series of studies about historiography was published, written by the American philosopher Hayden White, in which he examines how factual material is transformed into the historical narrative. In his essay 'The Historical Truth as Literary Artifact' he distinguishes between the raw historical material, which he calls 'the chronicle of events', and the 'story' (White 1978, 81-101). Among other things, the 'story' differs from the chronicle because it has a beginning, a middle and an end, and because the historian arranges factual material hierarchically, so that some events are given a lot of attention,

whereas others are pushed into the background as being less important. When White states that in the transition from chronicle to story historians change the *facts* by shifting them and arranging them hierarchically until they have become *fiction*, he is being deliberately provocative. Instead of denying this fictional element in their work, historians should constantly be aware of it, because then they would be alerted to the ideological bias in their stories.

I am convinced that, if Cicero had been able to read White's views in a decent Latin translation, he would have reacted with less surprise and shock than, for instance, Momigliano, who reacted to White's *Tropics of Discourse* by writing that the narrative techniques, used by historians, are of no interest to him. But then he continues: 'I have good reason to distrust any historian who has nothing new to say or who produces novelties, either in fact or in interpretation, which I discover to be unreliable. Historians are supposed to be discoverers of truth. No doubt they must turn their research into some sort of story before being called historians. But their stories must be true stories' (Momigliano 1984, 50-51). With all due respect, one has to say that Momigliano 'begs the question', because he refuses to ask himself what precisely takes place during the transformation from facts to stories, even true stories. When I compare White's and Momigliano's views with Cicero's short treatise in *De oratore*, I feel that Cicero deals in a more objective and fair manner than White with the *fundamenta*, the factual material, which has to fulfil the criterium of *veritas*, and that he also has more time for the fictional elements, introduced into the story by the historian, than Momigliano with his one-sided emphasis on the task of the historian as 'discoverer of truths'.

I now come to my third point, Cicero's attitude towards the distant past. In the introductory discussion to *The Laws*, brother Quintus wants Cicero to concentrate on the earliest history, *de Remo et Romulo*, because it has been so inadequately treated that no-one wants to read about it. Atticus, on the other hand, insists on a work about the present, a period full of important events, so that Cicero would be able to show his appreciation of Pompey, and in this way could once again do justice to his own divine and memorable consulship. It has its advantages in a dialogue to let others do the talking about sensitive issues. We can assume that the views, attributed to Quintus and Atticus, reflect a dilemma, which Cicero personally faced. Plutarch's biography of Cicero, which contains excellent source material (Flacelière/Chambry 1976, 56-61), makes it clear, that Cicero did have the intention to write about

Rome's *earliest* history: 'He intended to deal with the entire national history, to include in it much of Greek history, as well as all the traditions (λόγοι) and legendary stories (μῦθοι), which he had collected, but political and personal problems prevented him from doing so.' This is a fascinating statement, not least because of the λόγοι and μῦθοι, collected by Cicero. His numerous remarks about historiography in the second half of the fifties make it more than likely that he really did have these intentions.

Indeed, one could go further and say that he even partially carried them out. I am thinking of his description of the earliest history of Rome in the second book of his work about the state, *De re publica*. Although this survey, with its specific focus on the political development of Rome, cannot be considered a fully fledged work of history, yet the account of the era of the kings and the early Republic, as voiced by Scipio Aemilianus, is the longest passage about Rome's history written by Cicero (see Ferrary 1984 and Christes 1989).

It, therefore, makes sense within the framework of my subject to spend a bit more time on this survey. Scipio starts by quoting a statement made by the elder Cato, that the superiority of the public institutions in Rome is the result of an age-long development, to which many contributed, whilst the constitutions of other cities had been created by individuals, such as Lycurgus in Sparta. To explain this development, says Scipio, he will describe the creation, growth and maturity of the Roman state. Cicero speaks with palpable detachment about Rome's first king, Romulus, whose divine origin as a son of Mars he interprets as a kind of metaphor. Let us accept, he says, in words which were later repeated in a slightly altered version by Livy is his *praefatio*, that to someone who has displayed divine talent a divine father has been attributed. In the same rationalistic vein Cicero reviews at breakneck speed the well-known stories about Romulus. Problems like the murder of Remus are left out, and when Cicero relates the capture of Alba Longa and the death of Amulius, he introduces this with the words *ut iam a fabulis ad facta veniamus*, thus on the one hand again expressing his scepticism regarding many of the traditional stories, included by Livy in the first book, on the other hand pointing out that, even with regard to these earliest times, one can really make factual comments.

The foundation of Rome, which follows immediately, is, of course, also one of the hard facts. Here Cicero inserts a long digression concerning the favourable location of Rome, which, as he confesses in a letter to Atticus, he borrowed in its entirety from Dicaearchus (*Att.*

6.2.3). He attributes to Romulus great foresight when he says that 'already then did he surmise that this city would become the centre of an empire'. The length of Romulus' reign, 37 years, also belongs to the facts related by Cicero without hesitation; but when it comes to the deification of Romulus he expresses himself with great caution. When Romulus had disappeared during an eclipse of the sun, people thought he had been received amongst the gods. Cicero does not argue against this; he only says that it proves the enormous admiration in which the first king was held. This admiration is even more telling, because, as Cicero continues, previous cases of deification had occurred in primitive times, when people were naïve, and therefore gullible. However, Romulus' apotheosis occurred when Greece already had many poets, and when *fabulae*, fictions, were only believed when situated in the distant past. Lycurgus had given Sparta its laws more than a hundred years ago, and Homer lived thirty years before that. According to Cicero, this means that Homer should be placed in the beginning of the ninth century. The entire passage illustrates what we have read in Plutarch's biography concerning Cicero's aim to link Greek history to Roman history. Moreover, it strikes one that Cicero clearly believes that the cultural, post-mythological era reached by the Greeks, held also good for Rome. It seems that Cicero does not want to consider the idea that Rome was still in a more primitive phase. He clearly contrasts the two periods, the legendary one, the era of the *fabula*, and the historical one. Ever since Homer people have become educated (*docti*), they live in civilized times (*temporibus ipsis eruditis*) which means that they are no longer prepared to believe *fabulae*, i.e. accept something that is impossible (*quod fieri non potest*). Cicero probably derives this periodization from Varro, who in his work *De gente populi Romani* distinguished between the period before the Flood, the ἄδηλον, the period from the Flood up to the first Olympiad, which, because so many μῦθοι were related about it, he calls the μυθικόν, and thirdly, after that, ἱστορικόν (HRR II, Varro *De gente* fr. 3). The foundation of Rome and the apotheosis of Romulus therefore belong to the historical period, which makes the fact that the apotheosis was believed even more remarkable, and for Romulus even more honourable.

Scipio concludes his discussion about Romulus by stating that, thanks to the wise policies of one man, Rome had grown from infant to almost grown-up. Laelius replies by saying that Scipio has achieved something for which there is no example in Greek writings. For although Plato had spoken of one state in his *Politeia*, he had created this

state himself, and although this state is magnificent, it is far removed from human life and human behaviour. Other Greeks – Cicero has in mind Aristotle and his school – had written about all sorts of forms of government, without using a model. According to Laelius, Cicero combines the two methods. His argument does not flit from one city to the next, but concentrates on the Roman state, which is described by Scipio in its development.

Only, by paraphrasing Laelius' remarks in this way, I do not do full justice to the text. Laelius is not saying that Scipio simply describes the historical development, but that he attributes his own discoveries to others, rather than take responsibility for them, just as Socrates had done in the *Politeia*. To ascribe your own discoveries to others really boils down to the fact that you yourself invent a historical design and then act as if you found it in the historical sources. It is clear from the commentary on Scipio's historical narrative, which he puts into Laelius' mouth, that Cicero is well aware that the facts in no way speak for themselves, but only acquire a meaningful unity because of the way in which the historian interprets them. He may give the impression that he acts differently from Plato, who created his State out of nothing, but the Rome as described by Scipio is also really Scipio's creation. With his next remark Laelius makes it even clearer, that it has not escaped his notice how Scipio manipulates the story, for he states that Romulus had founded the city in that exceedingly favourable location either accidentally or out of necessity, and that it is Scipio who made this look as if it was Romulus' wise decision.

In the latest publication about this passage, Matthew Fox's *Roman Historical Myths* with the subtitle 'The Royal Period in Augustan Literature', the author discusses this passage under the heading 'The Ironization of the Ideal' (Fox 1996, 23-28). Of course, irony and certainly ironization are extremely slippery concepts; therefore we should follow Fox's argument very carefully. According to Fox, Cicero undermines the credibility of his argument by leaving room for mythical elements. Since Scipio, like Laelius, compares his own narrative with that of Socrates in Plato's *Politeia*, Cicero brings himself into the game, for what Plato is to Socrates, Cicero is to Scipio. Thus, still according to Fox, 'Cicero effectively fractures his own sphere.' This sounds good, but it is not really enlightening; however, Fox is still right when he says that Laelius undermines the historicity, and consequently the credibility, of Scipio's argument. The question is: why? To answer this question we first have to examine Laelius' criticism more closely. Fox calls this criticism a 'mo-

ment of deconstruction'. I don't think this is very helpful. When seen from Cicero's side this would be a kind of masochism which is not in accordance with his normal practise. I can imagine deconstruction, applied to his own work, in Ovid or in Apuleius, but not in Cicero. It is much more likely that Laelius' comment may sound like criticism but is in reality a compliment to Scipio, and therefore to Cicero himself. With his description of Romulus' reign Scipio is much more interesting and achieves a lot more than if he had merely repeated facts which speak for themselves. No, in his narrative he has shown the same creativity as Plato. He, too, has used his imagination, but he has done so with the help of historical facts; this makes his narrative about Rome's development, which results in an ideal form of government, much more realistic than Plato's fantasy. Laelius is not trying to knock down the historical image created by his friend Scipio, but rather to praise the ability to synthesize and the imaginative powers of Scipio, i.e. of Cicero, in the most subtle way possible: by means of contradiction.

To conclude I will briefly recapitulate the three points I have made. As long as he lived Cicero was deeply fascinated by history, not only for the sake of using his knowledge in this field, but also for the sake of knowledge itself. He often went to a lot of trouble to obtain fresh historical knowledge, even about small details. This makes it a priori unlikely that he saw writing history as a purely rhetorical exercise, although one has to admit that in *De oratore* he says nothing about that which Livy would later call *certius aliquid adferre*, to enrich the knowledge of the past with new facts. Cicero was certainly not blind to the fact that a historian's own imagination is indispensable in order to make the story consistent and to captivate the reader with a graphic narrative, without fundamentally querying the factuality of the underlying data. In the only long historical description we have left, Cicero makes it clear that the historical narrative is a structure built by the historian, and not a simple report of what took place in the past. The following statement of Elizabeth Rawson indeed applies to someone who had a great interest in history and so much knowledge about the practise of politics, someone who, moreover, had given profound consideration to what the writing of history entails: 'Such a man, both artist and scholar, is the complete historian of antiquity' (Rawson 1972, 45).

Originally entitled 'Cicero en de geschiedenis', this is Den Hengst's inaugural address held on 4 April 1997 on being appointed Professor of Latin Language and Literature at the University of Amsterdam.

CHAPTER TWO

DIC, MARCE TULLI! *Cicero's Attitude Towards the Caesarians* *After Caesar's Death*

Before speaking about the exchange of letters between Cicero and his old friend Matius, which are in a sense a sequel to the letters treated by my colleague Dr Kassies (Kassies 1985), I should like to make some observations of a more general nature.

In July 44 Cicero contemplates an edition of part of his private correspondence. In a letter to Atticus (16.5.5) he writes: 'There is no *recueil* of my letters, but Tiro has about seventy and I shall have to get some from you. I must examine and correct them. Then and then only they will be published.'¹ Leaving aside the question which letters Cicero had in mind, we may say that this was virtually an unprecedented step. We have letters from famous philosophers like Plato and we hear about letters from prominent statesmen like Caesar, but these were philosophical treatises or political pamphlets in epistolary form, not letters of a strictly private character.

However original Cicero's intention was to publish part of his private correspondence, letters in themselves were by his time such an important vehicle of communication that the art of letter-writing was made the subject of rhetorical inquiry. An impression of its contents may be gained from Demetrius *De Elocutione* 223-35, a treatise written in all probability in the first century AD in which the author however makes use of sources that are considerably older.² We do well to realize that this *locus classicus* of epistolary theory is not a treatise about the letter as a literary genre on a par with e.g. historiography or the oratorical *genera causarum*, but only a digression to illustrate the Plain Style, which according to Demetrius is suited to letter-writing. It is only in the 4th century manual of Iulius Victor that we find epistolography treated as a literary genre.

¹ Translation by Shackleton-Bailey 1999.

² See Schenkeveld 1964, 135-48. In the past decade, the debate about the date of the work has been revived due to a number of treatises and translations, which are excellently summarized by C.C. de Jonge (2009) in his *BMCR* review of Marini 2007 (note eds.).

Demetrius starts by giving a definition of the letter as 'one half of a dialogue' (οἷον τὸ ἕτερον μέρος τοῦ διαλόγου). As such it shares some of the characteristics of the dialogue. The letter should express the individual character (τὸ ἠθικόν) of its writer and be the image of his soul (οἷον εἰκόνα ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς). Demetrius distinguishes between the style of the dialogue and the style of the letter. The epistolary style should be somewhat more studied, because it is written and intended to be delivered as a gift, whereas the dialogue is the mimesis of improvised speech. Its main purpose is to maintain the friendship between the correspondents. He mentions letters of a more formal nature written to cities and kings but the emphasis is clearly on φιλία and φιλοφρόνησις. In its style and its contents the letter should avoid the embellishments of more elevated literary forms and the detailed discussions proper to more technical studies. With regard to the former Demetrius insists on brevity. He discourages the use of a periodic style, which he calls γελοῖον. The beauty of a letter should consist in professions of friendship and proverbial expressions, not in *recherché* phrases and *sententiae*. The writer must use simple words and stick to a single subject. This subject should not be of a technical nature nor too extensive, because the result would then be a treatise with a perfunctory χαῖρε written at the end.

As we see, Demetrius insists throughout the passage on unpretentiousness and modesty in style and contents as typical of good taste in letter-writing. The exposé is one-sided in its almost exclusive concentration on the letter as an instrument to maintain friendship. It is not made clear whether the author is thinking of private letters for practical purposes or of literary letters intended for a wider public. The explicit comparison with the dialogue – and διάλογος means just that in this passage, not 'conversation' – suggests to my mind, that he at any rate does not exclude the literary letters. However, I agree with Koskenniemi (1956, 53) that to make a sharp distinction between the two would be contrary to Demetrius' intentions. It is clearly his aim to warn against overstepping the bounds between letter-writing and other types of prose. The restrictions he imposes apply equally to both types of letters.

The question whether Cicero was familiar with Greek theories of letter-writing has been discussed by Koskenniemi and Thraede (1970, 27-47). Both scholars are of the opinion that he was, as indeed we might safely assume in view of his extensive knowledge of Greek rhetoric in general. More specifically Cicero's acquaintance with epistolographical theories may be inferred from casual remarks on different *genera litterarum* which Peter (1901, 23-4) put together and on which he based a ty-

polology which is as attractive in its simplicity as it is insufficient in accounting for the bewildering diversity of Cicero's correspondence. More interesting are the observations Thraede has made about a number of epistolary topoi in his letters which are well known from Greek sources as e.g. the *παρουσία*-motif, the idea that in his letter the writer presents himself to the mind's eye, so that for a moment the pain of his absence is felt no longer, and the idea on the part of the writer that he finds himself in a real face-to-face conversation with the addressee.

The arguments put forward by these scholars for Cicero's knowledge of epistolary theory are absolutely convincing. But Cicero wouldn't have been the man he was, if he had put these theories into practice in a self-conscious schoolboy fashion. We may assume that he viewed them with the same ironical disdain he displays in his *De oratore* when speaking of the pedantic Greek hair-splitters.

When we turn to modern attempts to assign to letters from antiquity their place in literature we get different answers depending on whether attention is focused on the writer, the letter or the addressee. In the well-known view of Deissmann (1923⁴, 194-6) as put forward in his *Licht vom Osten*, we have to distinguish between 'Brief' and 'Epistel'. The former is exclusively meant to be read by the addressee, it has no literary pretensions whatsoever and it is of an intimate character. The 'Epistel' on the other hand is intended to be read by a wider public and must be seen as a literary product. Deissmann thus makes the intention of the author his criterium to distinguish between non-literary 'Briefe' and literary 'Episteln'. Intermediary forms, 'Episteln' posing as 'Briefe', 'Briefe' putting on epistolary airs, he disqualifies as hybrids. From this point of view Cicero's letters, without exception, belong to the category of non-literary products.

Now this verdict certainly tallies with the bulk of Cicero's letters to Atticus. In his *Ad Familiares* however, we find a considerable number of letters which abound in rhetorical flourishes and which are small-scale virtuoso performances in prose. As an example I mention his request to Luceius for a historical monograph, which Cicero himself calls *valde bella* in a subsequent letter to Atticus. The private character of a letter does not entail artlessness. On the other hand, as Koskeniemi has observed, an accomplished writer like Seneca can give his letters intended for a wider public an air of naturalness besides which the stilted prose of some papyrus-letters sounds very artificial indeed. So in assessing a letter we have to take into account not only the author's intention but also the degree of stylization in the letter itself. This view is adopted by

Sykutris (*Suppl.* 5, 187) in his Realenzyklopädie-article on epistolography. After a little skirmish with Deissmann he announces his decision to regard as literary letters all those which (I quote) 'either have been written with a view to publication, or afterwards have been accounted literature and have been read and imitated as such because of their contents, their form or the personality of the writer or the addressee'. This might be called a Gordian solution. Especially the last criterium, the personality of the addressee, offers fascinating possibilities. If I were to write a letter to, let us say, Graham Greene, and suppose my letter would not be destroyed upon receipt, would posterity put my note under the heading 'literature'?

I should prefer, in order to avoid the traps of a conception of literature which is either anachronistic or too vague to be of any use, and which moreover is arbitrary anyway, to describe the letters as a class of written texts meant to establish direct contact between the writer and his addressee or addressees. Its style and contents may allow for a wide range of levels and subjects, but its overriding character is the directness of the contact between writer and addressee. The writer always speaks in the first person. The addressee is, or is supposed to be, a person known to the writer.

It may well be that the uncertainty concerning the literary status of Cicero's letters is the reason why comparatively little attention is given to his letters in our university curricula. And yet, for a number of reasons, they deserve more. Seen as a distinct type of text, they may become the object of what is nowadays called discourse-study (for an explanation of this field of research, see De Beaugrande 1994, 207–10; note eds.). They offer exceptional possibilities for linguistic comparative studies of Cicero's letters and his other prose-works and of the way he adapts his style to his correspondents. The eighty letters of others included in the *Ad Familiares* lend themselves to comparisons between his style and that of other educated persons of his day. The value of the correspondence as a historical source is self-evident, as indeed Cornelius Nepos was aware who, only ten years after Cicero's death, remarked that his letters provided the reader with a *historia contexta eorum temporum*.

Lastly, Cicero's letters give us an insight into the genesis of his literary works, especially during the last two years of his life. I hope that at least some of these aspects will be illustrated by the exchange of letters between Matius and Cicero, for which I ask attention now.

The Roman *eques* C. Matius is known to us almost exclusively from

Cicero's correspondence. In 53 Cicero congratulates Trebatius on his acquaintance with Matius whom he describes as *homo suavissimus doctissimusque*. The qualification *doctissimus* returns, as we shall see, in the letter to Matius, along with the remark that it was he who stimulated Cicero to write his philosophical works. We must hope that Matius did not know the *Tusculanae Disputationes* too well; or else he would have known that in the closing paragraph of that work the same compliment is paid to his mortal enemy M. Brutus. Anyhow, we have an independent witness of Matius' erudition, Quintilianus, who tells us that Apollodorus of Pergamum dedicated his rhetorical handbook to this same C. Matius (*Inst.Or.* 3.1.18). Matius' *suavitas* is also mentioned again by Cicero when he refers to the long hours he passed with him in pleasant conversation (§5). Both aspects of Matius' nature are summed up by Cicero with the words *lepos, humanitas, litterae*.

Matius is like Atticus in that he too declined to pursue a political career. Unlike Atticus he committed himself totally to one of the dynasts, Caesar. This does not prevent Cicero from using terms of respect in referring to Matius in the events that led up to the civil war. In April 49 in a letter to Atticus he calls him *temperatus et prudens* and *semper auctor oti*, who viewed with horror the rabble among Caesar's followers (*Cic. Att.* 9.11.2). After Caesar's victory over Pompey Matius did everything in his power to establish friendly relations between Cicero and Caesar.

Of Matius' reaction to Caesar's death we get a vivid impression in the first coherent letters Cicero wrote to Atticus after the event. Matius is as desperate as Cicero was exultant. Matius expects total ruin and takes a grim delight in prophecies of doom. 'Utterly deplorable', is Cicero's comment, and he contrasts Matius' behaviour unfavourably with that of Oppius who likewise mourns his leader, but abstains from language which might offend the *boni*. In the next letters to Atticus Cicero refers to Matius as 'Baldhead' (φαλάκρωμα, *madarus*), which is a sign of his ill-will against Matius, since Cicero's use of nicknames is always malicious. He looks upon Matius with deep suspicion and he is shocked by the 'revanchist' feelings expressed by Caesarians. He even calls Matius *inimicissimus oti, id est Bruti*, which means a complete reversal of his former judgment *semper auctor oti*.

It is against this background that we must try to interpret Cicero's letter to Matius. Its immediate cause is a complaint by Matius, submitted to Cicero by their mutual friend Trebatius. But we have to read on until §7 before we hear what Matius has been complaining about. It has come to his attention that Cicero believed he had voted in support of a

law-proposal, left unspecified, and that he had criticised Matius' co-operation in preparing the *ludi Victoriae Caesaris*. Matius looks upon Cicero's criticism on these points as a violation of their *amicitia*. How does Cicero go about answering this complaint and what is the tone of his letter? We know from his letters to Atticus that Cicero was very critical of Matius' attitude after the Ides of March, but in his letter we find no terms of disapproval at all. On the contrary, after the introductory paragraph Cicero devotes §§ 2-6 to a detailed enumeration of the *officia* Matius has paid to him both during the civil war and afterwards during Caesar's dictatorship. By doing so, he suggests that it is inconceivable that he could have wished to violate his friendship with Matius. His method is very elegant indeed. Instead of insisting on his personal feelings for Matius he holds up a mirror to Matius in which his own actions are reflected in a most flattering light. In this way Cicero depicts his friendship for Matius as the expression of his personal gratitude: 'This is how you behaved towards me, now could I be such a monster as to forget all those services?'

In §§ 7 and 8 Cicero comes to the point. We are not absolutely sure about the law he is referring to. It must have been a proposal that caused grave offence to Cicero. Now he had ample cause for displeasure, because in July and August Antony ran at least five proposals through the Assembly which are severely criticised by Cicero in his First Philippic. He uses for Antony's *lex de vi et maiestate* the most damning remarks. Kytzler's assumption that this was the proposal Cicero is referring to is highly plausible. In the same paragraph Matius' part in the organization of the games in honour of Caesar, held during the last week of July, is referred to. We know from Cicero's letter to Atticus (15.2) that Cicero objected to these games being organized by Octavian and that he explicitly disapproved of the choice of Matius as one of the collaborators, no doubt because that would identify Octavian with the inveterate Caesarians.

Nevertheless, in this paragraph Cicero denies that he has ever expressed disapproval of Matius' actions. Indeed, he insists that he has always defended him against his detractors, either by a flat denial or by adducing extenuating circumstances and saying that it was Matius' *pietas* and *humanitas* which made him act the way he did.

If Cicero is less than sincere in outlining his position towards Matius in this paragraph, he does not want to avoid the heart of the matter, to which he turns in the next. The judgment of Matius' attitude depends on the appreciation of Caesar. If Caesar was a tyrant – and Cicero open-

ly says that in his opinion he was – Matius must understand that his attitude is open to criticism. We cannot doubt that the opinion Cicero ascribes to *nonnulli*, namely *patriam amicitiae praeponendam* is held by himself. Yet, he prefers to put this fundamental dilemma before Matius as a topic of philosophical discussion to which the Academic method of *disputare in utramque partem* can be applied. Cicero appeals to Matius' philosophical knowledge in calling him *doctissimus*. For himself Cicero chooses to act, in this letter at least, as the defendant and again he stresses Matius' *fides* and *humanitas* in his love for Caesar even after his death.

Cicero's letter is written with the utmost care. All the stylistic particularities of his more informal letters, such as ellipses, exclamations and the use of Greek phrases, are absent. The same carefulness is seen in its disposition. The opening paragraph – itself a pleasant vignette closely resembling an interlude in the *Brutus* (Cic. *Brutus* 10) – is echoed in the final sentence, when the question *molestiae plus an voluptatis* gets a positive answer in *habeo gratiam Trebatio*. The intervening paragraphs devoted to the services paid to Cicero with their repeated rhetorical questions and tricola lead up in a crescendo to the final compliment: *omnia me tua delectant, sed maxime maxima, cum fides in amicitia, consilium, gravitas, constantia, tum lepos, humanitas, litterae*. In the treatment of the issue itself Cicero shows great tact. When he has to refer to criticisms of Matius' behaviour, he reminds him that it is his *dignitas* which makes him vulnerable to attack. The condemnation of Caesar as a tyrant is formulated as a hypothesis and immediately preceded by the complimentary *doctissimus*. In view of all this it comes as a surprise that one of the greatest authorities on Cicero's correspondence, Karl Büchner (1962, 192) interprets this letter as an 'Absagebrief' and says: 'man spürt doch an der Kühle des Briefes, seiner Auf- und Abrechnung dass Cicero von Matius tief enttäuscht ist'. It is true that the *amicitia*-jargon which abounds in this letter is to a large extent conventional. Two letters to Caesarians, Trebonius and Oppius, written in Dec. 46 and July 44 respectively, illustrate this clearly (*Fam.* 15.21, 11.29). Here we find enumerations of *beneficia* in which the same critical moments are mentioned. Even striking phrases like *dilexi te quo die cognovi, studium vel in absentem me vel in praesentis meos, praeter haec quae commemoravi ... habeo multa occultiora* and the concluding phrase *quibus nisi credideris me omnis officii et humanitatis expertem iudicaris* find their counterparts in these letters. The parallels which Kytzler has pointed out render it impossible to read Cicero's letter as a highly personal profession of friendship. Still, there are in this letter elements which are, I think, in-

compatible with Büchner's 'kühle Distanz'. A letter which had no ulterior aim beyond the refutation of a *querela* would not be concluded with the emphatic mention of the great merits of the complainer as happens here in §8 *quae maxima sunt laudum tuarum*. Furthermore Matius' *humanitas* is repeatedly referred to, which applies not only to his erudition, but also to his behaviour towards his friends. And thirdly the circumspection and the tact with which Cicero touches upon the fundamental difference of opinion between Matius and himself makes it impossible for me to subscribe to Büchner's view: 'Ciceros Brief ist kühl, weil er die Freundschaft aufgibt.'

Now to Matius' reply. He begins and ends with an echo from Cicero's letter *Magnam voluptatem ... cepi* and *Trebatio nostro magnas ago gratias*. From the beginning the tone is confident. Less elegantly than Cicero he reminds him without ceremony of the services he paid him in speaking of his *propensa et perpetua benevolentia*. After his conclusion that Cicero's feelings towards him have remained unaltered, he might have added some polite phrases and left it at that. But what follows is an elaborate self-justification, which is certainly more than Cicero had bargained for. The reason is, I suppose, that Matius saw through Cicero's tactics and was well aware that what Cicero put into the mouth of others was his own criticism of Matius. He enters the game by treating these so-called others to a very firm reply. The fundamental issue, raised by Cicero, is first dealt with. It is remarkable that Matius does not oppose *amicitia* and *libertas patriae*, but just *patria*, or rather *salus patriae*, as we may infer from the subordinate clause introduced by *proinde ac si*. Cicero had used the phrase *libertas patriae* in the restricted sense of 'freedom from the rule of a tyrant'. Matius does not react to this notion of *libertas*, since this would have compelled him to give his opinion on the nature of Caesar's rule. He gets around this difficulty by substituting *salus patriae* and prefers to associate *libertas*, as is evident from §§ 3 and 8, with the individual liberty accorded to the citizens. He scornfully observes that in this respect the *libertatis auctores* adopted a less liberal position than Caesar himself had done. From the point of view of *salus patriae* he cannot see the liquidation of Caesar as advantageous. But before he allows himself to be drawn into a discussion of higher politics he stops himself short. He refuses to 'make debating points' (*non agam astute*) and says with unmistakable sarcasm not to have arrived at that philosophical level.

The next sentence is the most controversial in the letter. Until the

article by Heuss (1956) on these letters appeared, it was supposed that Matius made a distinction between Caesar as a political figure and as a personal friend. Dahlmann went so far as to describe Matius on the strength of this sentence as the representative of a conception of friendship he contrasted as 'Greek' and 'individualistic' with Cicero's conception of *amicitia* which he styles 'Roman' and 'utilitarian'. That is a somewhat top-heavy construction on a shaky basis. As Heuss has rightly pointed out, the emphasis is on the twofold *neque* and the clause *sed amicum, quamquam re offendebar, tamen non deserui* serves to elucidate the words *neque Caesarem ... sum secutus*, which without this modification would have been a blatant lie. Now, if the emphasis is not on the words *Caesarem* and *amicum*, what is Matius trying to say? First, we must not overlook the word *enim*. The sentence contains the explanation why Matius refuses to enter upon a discussion of political philosophy. This is because his choice to stick to Caesar was not dictated by any such philosophy, but a decision on strictly personal grounds not to forsake his friend. Matius does not value friendship higher than the interest of the state, as Dahlmann would have us believe. The dilemma just did not present itself to him in those terms. He is concerned to preserve his personal integrity in the midst of political developments he clearly disapproves of. He declined to profit by Caesar's successes, although he had every opportunity to do so. Others were less scrupulous, and quite a few of them took part in the assassination and posed as good republicans afterwards. Matius' anger at what he regards as hypocrisy and ungratefulness is a recurrent theme in his letter. That he is voicing not just his personal feelings, but the opinion of a number of Caesar's followers is evident from *Att.* 14.22 where they are quoted as saying that Caesar's clemency had been his undoing. Although Matius does not say so in as many words, the blame attaches to Cicero also. In *Att.* 14.22.2 Cicero writes *habent in ore nos ingratos*.

Matius proceeds with a vigorous attack on those people who were to Caesar *et invidiae et exitio*. Here we have to think of disloyal Caesarians, who first made Caesar unpopular by their greed and then turned against him. That such despicable persons dare to use threatening language moves Matius to great indignation. It must be this emotion that brings Matius to uncontrolled expressions as *periculi terrores* later on in this paragraph. Given the situation in the late summer or autumn (I shall discuss the exact date later on), this must be taken as an exaggeration. Antony has, at least in Italy, consolidated his power and the more prom-

inent republicans are all abroad.

From *sed quid mihi suscensent* in §4 onwards Matius discusses the consequences of his mourning of Caesar. His wish *cupio Caesaris mortem omnibus esse acerbam* sounds very menacing. It might be interpreted as a call for revenge. To prevent his words from being understood in this way, Matius subscribes to the thesis of his hypothetical opponents *at debeo rem p. velle salvam*. In proof of this Matius adduces his *ante acta vita* and *reliqua mea spes*. The passage is generally supposed to be Matius' defence against incriminations of his voting in favour of the law Cicero referred to. Heuss even thinks that Matius silently admits having voted for Antony's proposal. I don't agree with this view. Matius is not referring to any concrete action in the past, but to his attitude now and in the future. He wants to make clear that his mourning of Caesar will never make him throw in his lot with those extreme Caesarians who would even risk civil war in order to avenge Caesar's death. A reversal of the political order is something he will never endorse, as this would be contrary to his own interests. That, it seems to me, is the implication of his words *reliqua mea spes* and *si sentis (mihi) expedit recte fieri*.

In the sixth paragraph Matius presents his part in the organization of the *ludi Caesaris* as a private *officium*, in the same way as he had explained his position during the civil war. We must remind ourselves that these games, with the appearance of the *sidus Iulium*, were to acquire only later, in the propaganda of Octavian, the importance we are used to attach to them. In Cicero's letters, apart from the passage under discussion and the letter to Atticus just quoted (*Att.* 15.2) they are never mentioned. It is therefore not so absurd as Heuss says it is that Matius refuses to see this as an action with important political implications.

What must have given grave offence to Cicero is Matius' open avowal of his regular contacts with Antony. Matius justifies this by pointedly reminding Cicero that Antony did represent legitimate authority in speaking of Antony as consul. As he did in the third paragraph, he prefers to turn to the attack by remarking that many professed republicans visited Antony. Only they did it out of selfinterested motives. Matius ends his letter in the confident tone in which he began. His moderate attitude, he insists, will protect him against any suspicion of revolutionary leanings. In the closing paragraph the words *animus simplex atque amicus* makes one rub one's eyes. Was Cicero's letter friendly? Superficially, yes. Tactful, conciliatory? Yes, we may call it that. But straightforward? That is about the last word to come to my mind. The irony, if that

is the word, is not to be missed in this parting shot. It is murderously clever and, what is even more beautiful, totally unanswerable.

After having discussed these letters I should like to make some remarks on their date. The *terminus post quem* is given by the mention of the *ludi Caesaris*: at the end of July. Antony is referred to as consul, so they must have been written in 44. Cicero is in Tuscum, which leaves us the choice between the end of August when he returns to Rome after his five months' absence and mid October when he leaves Rome again to go to Puteoli. The former date was preferred by most scholars until Kytzler argued in favour of the latter. His arguments were that the mention of regular discussions suggests that Cicero has recently left Rome. Moreover, Cicero's question *numquidnam novi?* seems too casual after an absence of five months. Thirdly, if Cicero was on his way back to Rome, he might have dealt with Matius' *querela* in a private conversation. I don't think these arguments, which are with some hesitation accepted by Shackleton Bailey, are totally convincing. During his absence from Rome Cicero was never out of touch with what was going on in Rome, as his correspondence shows. We also hear about discussions with leading Caesarians during his absence. Therefore I don't see why we should accept Kytzler's (1960) view on the first two points. As for the third argument, it is equally or indeed more probable that Cicero would have preferred a carefully composed letter to deal with this issue to a conversation the course of which is less predictable. But the decisive argument against dating the letters in mid October is that by then the political situation has become so explosive after Antony's speech in the senate of September 19th, in which he declares his enmity towards Cicero, that I think it inconceivable for Cicero to write with as much understanding for a professed Caesarian as he does in this letter and for Matius to speak as openly about his contacts with Antony in a letter which is firm, but not openly hostile. Therefore I should like to return to the traditional dating in the end of August.

As we saw, Matius insisted throughout his letter on his personal integrity and presented his actions as *privata officia*. Does personal integrity provide sufficient justification to follow a leader whose aim is absolute power in the state? And isn't it a form of deceit or self-deception to present services to such a leader as *privata officia* of no political consequence to the *status rei publicae*? For an answer to those questions we must turn, not to Cicero's correspondence, but to a philosophical treatise and a political pamphlet from the same period. Dahlmann was the first to point

to striking resemblances between Cicero's letter to Matius and the §§ 36-43 of his *Laelius de amicitia*. In the discussion about the composition of this dialogue, these paragraphs have presented great problems. At the close of §32 Laelius had stated that true friendships are everlasting. Immediately after this statement Laelius proceeds to report the opinion of Scipio about the causes by which friendships may be disrupted. In §36 Ti. Gracchus is introduced of whom Laelius says later on: *regnum occupare conatus est, vel regnavit is quidem paucos menses*. The discussion about Gracchus is brought to a head in §§ 41-43, where Laelius speaks about his followers: 'I cannot say without weeping what his friends and relatives, who followed him even after his death did with regard to P. Scipio.' Without friends, no one could even try to win absolute power.

Therefore the *boni* among the followers of the tyrant should be told that, in case they get unwittingly involved in a friendship with such a man, they should not feel in duty bound to remain true to him if he acts wrongly. The *improbi* however must be punished as severely as the man they have followed. After mentioning more examples from Greek and Roman history Laelius issues the warning: 'let no one think it permissible to follow a friend even when he wages war on his country'. Laelius adds a remark which can only be interpreted as a *vaticinium post eventum*: *quod quidem ... haud scio an aliquando futurum sit*. Here Cicero gives a negative answer to the question whether personal integrity might justify adherence to a dictator. But he does so in a comparatively mild manner. He distinguishes between *boni* and *improbi* among the followers of a tyrant. And for the *boni* he finds words of excuse: *ignari, casu aliquo, inciderint*. For them it is sufficient to instruct them to mend their ways. Ti. Gracchus as the prefiguration of Caesar also appears in the proem of the *Laelius*. There the transition from the first three paragraphs to the rest of the proem is so harsh that it has been held on good grounds that Cicero is conflating two versions of his introduction and that the stitches still show. Büchner has argued on the basis of a persuasive analysis of the *Laelius* as a whole that 26-43 are a later addition. Combining his findings with the analysis of the proem he concludes that Cicero has incorporated these 'zeitgemässe Betrachtungen' in disguise into the dialogue under the impact of the events after the Ides of March. Although there is no certainty to be gained about the date of these additions, it seems to me a plausible suggestion that the exchange of letters with Matius has stimulated Cicero to a further investigation of the limits of friendship.

But this was not Cicero's final verdict. After Antony had delivered his

violent speech in the senate on September 19th, which implied a formal *renuntiatio amicitiae*, Cicero replied in his Second Philippic. The speech has never been delivered, but circulated on a small scale as a political pamphlet. In this ruthless reckoning with Antony, we come across some passages which offer striking parallels to the Matius-letters. I am referring to §§ 28-31, in which Cicero reacts to Antony's accusation that he himself was the *auctor intellectualis* of the assassination. Here we find the criticism of Matius' mourning for Caesar turned upside down. 'Don't you realize, that if it is to be thought a crime to have wanted Caesar's death, of which you accuse me, it is also a crime to have rejoiced at his murder? Is there anyone, except those who were pleased with his tyranny, who did not want this to happen, or disapproved of it when it was done?' In this final reckoning there is no longer any room for qualifications. Rejoicing in Caesar's death is equated with collaboration in the assassination, mourning him means to be an accomplice in Caesar's despotism. In this political warfare a position of political neutrality like Matius claimed for himself is impossible. Small wonder then that Cicero warns Atticus not to show this pamphlet to Matius. He requests the same cautiousness for his *Heracleideion*, a dialogue à la Heraclides Ponticus, in which the assassination of Caesar is defended, and which Cicero is still working at on October 25th. As the spokesman of the republicans Cicero had chosen Trebonius. Who was to be his counterpart is not known. Matius would have been the ideal candidate. In §31 of his Second Philippic Cicero formulates his opinion in the most concise way: *Ego ... nego quicquam esse medium*. This applies not only to M. Brutus, but also to a man like Matius. In his ever increasing fury against Antony Cicero gives a new meaning to the thesis he had put forward ten years earlier in his *De Republica*: *L. Brutus docuit ... in civitate liberanda privatum esse neminem*.

To sum up: in this exchange of letters, both of them masterpieces in their own right, we see Cicero trying to maintain the friendship with Matius without dissimulating the fundamental issue which divides them. As a senator and as the author of *De republica*, he transcends the level of daily politics and a purely pragmatic assessment of individual behaviour. Matius on the other hand is inclined, because of the despicable attitude of not a few self-styled republicans, to dismiss the philosophical justification of Caesar's murder as specious pleading by pettifogging lawyers. For him it is sufficient to show that he has a clear conscience and to assure Cicero that he has no intentions to cooperate with the *improbi* in any attempt to overthrow the state. Cicero and Mat-

ius speak on different levels. In order to bring this discussion to an end, Cicero had to turn away from Matius and put the issue in its historical and philosophical perspective, as he did in his *Laelius*. Later on, in his Second Philippic, and probably in his *Heracleideion*, he used his arguments, refined and sharpened in the *Laelius*, as weapons in his life and death struggle with Antony.

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CHAPTER THREE

MEMORIA, THESAURUS ELOQUENTIÆ

The Auctor ad Herennium, Cicero and Quintilian on Mnemotechnics

The classical rhetor demanded that his pupils spoke from memory.¹ According to Quintilian this was a prerequisite for a fluent delivery. Besides, by seemingly speaking off the cuff the orator could avoid the impression of wanting to manipulate his audience with a carefully prepared text (*Inst.* 11.2.46/7). Also according to Quintilian, an orator with a busy practice was allowed to use written notes, stating the main points of the argument (*Inst.* 10.7.30/1). With regard to Cicero's method we read in this passage, that he copied out in full the crucial parts of the speech, in particular the *exordium*,² prepared the rest in his mind, and trusted his talent for improvisation to deal with unexpected developments (for example interruptions). Whenever we are told that a speaker read his speeches out loud from beginning to end, as Suetonius tells us about Augustus (*Aug.* 84), the explanatory remarks make it clear that this was an exception.

For this reason mnemonic exercises formed a permanent part of the rhetorical training, and in the theoretical treatises about rhetoric *memoria*, memorization, was ranked under the *officia oratoris*, after *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio*, but before *actio* (Leeman 1963, vol. I, 27). The *officia* are listed in this order in *Rhet. Her.* 1.3, *Cic. Inv.* 1.9 and *Quint. Inst.* 3.3.13, a meaningful order if we look on the *officia* as the tasks which the orator has to carry out successively, starting with the conception of the speech up until its utterance. As will become clear in the following

¹ The standard work about mnemotechnics in antiquity is Blum 1969. A more recent treatment of the subject is Müller 1996. Yates 1966 deals with the spectacular development of the *ars memorativa* in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The book offers fascinating speculations about applications of the technique in philosophy, the visual arts and in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. All handbooks about rhetorics do contain a, usually summary, description of mnemotechnics. By far the best of these is the relevant chapter in Caplan 1970, 196-246. For modern, psychological insights into the field of memory see Radvansky 2006.

² Cicero recounts in several places, that he was very nervous, especially at the start of the speech: *Div. Caec.* 41 *non solum commoveor animo sed etiam toto corpore perhorresco*. This remained the case, even when he grew older: *Deiot.* 1, *Cluent.* 57, *Acad.* 2.64. On the strength of Quintilian's remark it seems unwise to dismiss these utterances as coquettishness. Cf. Leeman-Pinkster 1981, vol. I 214.

pages, this does not mean that the problem, as to where in the rhetorical texts *memoria* should be discussed, is solved.

To help him memorize the orator used a mnemotechnical system, which probably goes back to the middle of the fourth century BC, and is based on three older theories about the memory and the way it functions:³

- the memory can be compared to a waxed, wooden board (Pl. *Theaet.* 191 c 8 – 195 a 9 about the κήρινον ἐκμαγεῖον), in which thoughts and sensory perceptions leave a more or less deep impression;
- sensory perceptions leave the sharpest impressions; amongst them the visual ones are the strongest (Pl. *Phaedr.* 250 d 3 ὅψις γὰρ ἡμῖν ὀξυτάτη τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔρχεται αἰσθήσεων);
- the memory works in an associative way. In the *Phaedo* (73 d 6 – 74 a 3) Plato makes a distinction between associations ἀφ' ὁμοίων (when one sees a portrait of Simmias, one thinks of the person Simmias) and ἀφ' ἀνομοίων (when one sees Simmias, one thinks of Cebes). Aristotle adds to this second type (which he calls ἀπὸ τοῦ σύνεγγυς) the association ἀπ' ἐναντίου (*Mem.* 451 b 25).

These views about the memory form the basis for mnemotechnics. Since the only detailed descriptions of this technique have been formulated in Latin (*Rhet. Her.* 3.28–40, Cic. *De orat.* 2.350–60 and Quint. *Inst.* 11.2), I will only use the Latin terminology. The central concepts are *loci* and *imagines* (*signa, simulacra*). In order to be able to reproduce a series of facts in an argument in the right order, one has to imagine a space (*regio*) with which one is totally familiar (a house, a street, a city), within which there are a number of fixed points, the *loci*. These *loci* function as a background to *imagines*, representations or symbols of the parts of the series, which has to be memorized. During the process of memorizing one places the *imagines* inside the *loci*. When the series has to be reproduced one imagines oneself walking through the space past the several *loci*, and observes with the eye of the mind the *imagines*, which have been placed there.

The three treatises mentioned compare putting the *imagines* inside the *loci* to writing letters in wax, and 'decoding' them to reading. Just as letters, which have served their purpose, can be erased, thus the *loci* can be emptied after use, to make room for a new set of *imagines*. The fact

³ The earliest mention of the complete system can be found in Arist. *Mem.* 452 a 12–4. Blum (1969, 80–104) convincingly shows that Theodectes, orator and tragedian from the fourth century BC, developed mnemotechnics. For older views about the memory see Sorabji 1972, 22–35.

that visual impressions sink in best means that in this system objects, even imperceptible ones, which have to be remembered, are methodically visualized. Finally association plays a decisive role in this technique. Except in cases, where a picture of a person, animal or object can be imprinted as an *imago*, the *imago* will always create an allusive reference, which will dredge up from the memory the required information.

Before examining how the three Latin authors deal with this system, which is here only sketched in outline, I raise the question, which has probably already occurred to many a reader: does this system not have the opposite effect? Does it not put a double burden on the memory, if on top of what really matters to us, we also have to drum into our memory the *imagines*? The answer is 'no'. Modern studies on psychology with regard to the memory (see note 1) acknowledge without reservation the efficiency of this system. 'Forgetting' is not caused by quantitative overburdening of the long-term memory,⁴ or because memories can only be stored for a limited time, but by the fact that at a given time the required information cannot be found. Memory can be compared in this respect with a large library. If a book ends up in the wrong place it becomes untraceable. Knowledge is equally useless, even if we are sure it is stored in the memory, if we have no way of digging it up. This is where *loci* and *imagines* prove their usefulness. They function as 'retrieval cues', which guide the search inside the memory, or, staying with the library comparison, as a pointer to the shelf on which the book can be found.

When we read the three treatises *de memoria* one after the other, it soon becomes apparent that, if we want a clear description of the system, Cicero is of no assistance. Antonius, the speaker in the relevant passage, does not want to tire his audience with a lengthy exposition of what is common knowledge. He introduces his extremely short τεχνολογία with the words *qua re ne in re nota et pervolgata multus et insolens sim* ... (2.358). We, therefore, have to consult the Rhetor ad Herennium and Quintilian to form an impression as to how this topic is treated in rhetorical handbooks, so that, armed with this knowledge, we can interpret Cicero's way of dealing with it.

The first question asked by the Rhetor is (3.28-9) *utrum memoria habeat quiddam artificiosi an omnis ab natura proficiscatur*. He promises to

⁴ Termed thus as distinct from the short-term memory, with which we remember for example a telephone number only until we have dialled it.

deal with this question elsewhere (he never does) and assumes for the present that *ars* and *praeceptio* are really important. About the relationship between *ars* (*doctrina*) and *natura* (*ingenium*) he says in conclusion: *nec hoc magis aut minus in hac re quam in ceteris artibus fit, ut ingenio doctrina, praeceptione natura nitescat*. This topos, which is also frequently mentioned whenever the art of rhetoric as a whole is discussed,⁵ is of particular importance here, because the *ars memoriae* was very controversial. One can hear a late echo of this polemic in Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 523 τέχνη μνήμης οὐτ' εἰσὶν οὐτ' ἄν γένοιτο. μνήμη μὲν γὰρ δίδωσι τέχνας, αὐτὴ δὲ ἀδίδακτος καὶ οὐδεμίᾳ τέχνῃ ἀλωτός.

The next paragraphs (30-2) contain detailed instructions regarding the *loci*. They must be limited in size, clearly delineated, and conspicuous. The Rhetor gives as examples a house, an *intercolumnium*, a vault etc. Conspicuity and order are prerequisites. Therefore it is wrong to choose *loci*, which are interchangeable (thus no rows of *intercolumnia*); they must be light, but not overexposed; not too big, for then the *imago* will become too insignificant; not too small, for then the *imago* will not fit. The inward visualization is so realistic, that he even warns against choosing too busy a *regio* for the *loci*, *propterea quod et frequentia et obambulatio hominum conturbat et infirmitat imaginum notas*. This is also attested by the instruction to leave a distance of thirty feet between the *loci*. The Rhetor emphasises the importance of immovable *loci*. This guarantees that series are remembered in the right order, and makes it possible to reproduce a series from any given point, from front to back and vice versa.

The passage about the *imagines* (33-7) starts with the important distinction between *memoria verborum* and *memoria rerum*. *Imagines* can be created of the content of a speech (*res*) as well as of the articulation (*verba*). The author gives an example of both. In order to memorize that the prosecutor has alleged that the defendant has poisoned somebody in order to lay his hands on an inheritance, and that there are witnesses, one should imagine the murder victim ill in bed, and the defendant next to the bed, with in one hand a cup, in the other a will, and on his ringfinger *testiculi arietini*, a purse, made out of a ram's scrotum. All the elements, which the advocate should have at his disposal, are represented in this *imago*, including the witnesses. Whereas this representation may seem helpful, the example given by the Rhetor regarding

⁵ Caplan gives a series of parallels in a note ad loc. in his Loeb-edition of *Rhet. Her.* See also Leeman-Pinkster I, 209-11 about the triad *natura-ars-exercitatio*.

the *memoria verborum* is dubious. In order to remember the line *Iam domum itionem reges Atridae parant*, the first *locus* has to contain a representation of a certain Domitius, who raises his hands to the sky whilst being flogged by members of the family of the Marcii Reges. *Hoc erit 'iam domum itionem reges'*, states the Rhetor. In a second *locus* one should imagine the actors Cimber and Aesopus, dressing up to play the parts of Agamemnon and Menelaos in the Iphigeneia: *hoc erit: Atridae parant*. In Cicero we already find scepticism regarding this technique, in Quintilian we find total rejection. Whatever the case, the *imagines* of both categories must be striking. The Rhetor gives the simple explanation that everyday phenomena, however grand, like the sunrise, do not make an impression, whereas unusual ones, like an eclipse of the sun, do. His advice is, therefore, to choose *imagines* of people in action (*aliquid agentes*), who stand out on account of their beauty or ugliness, for instance because they are dressed in purple or covered in blood. Without actually articulating it his choice of words suggests that the Rhetor, when talking about his *imagines*, is thinking of conspicuously dressed up characters in dramatic poses, in short, of stage personae, just as in the above mentioned example of *memoria verborum*.

In the last part of his treatise (38-40) the author engages in a polemic against Greek predecessors, who include among their mnemotechnical instructions an awful lot of *imagines* for individual words. This is a hopeless task, kills off a pupil's personal initiative, and does not take into account the fact that associations are not equally effective for everyone. This didactic rejection deserves to be quoted in full: *praeceptoris est docere quemadmodum quaeri quidque conveniat, et unum aliquod aut alterum, non omnia quae eius generis erunt, exempli causa subicere, quo res possit esse dilucidior*. He concludes with a justification of the *verborum memoria*, which reveals some doubt about the intrinsic value of the necessary training required: practising this technique will see to it that the *memoria rerum*, of which the usefulness is beyond dispute, will come more easily to the pupil.

The Rhetor's treatise seems to be a faithful account of the system, found by the author in unspecified Greek sources. We may assume an independent contribution in the Latin examples of *imagines rerum* and *verborum*, and definitely also in his principled and intelligent rejection of the instructions given by Greek rhetoricians regarding the latter subject.

Quintilian's treatise *de memoria*, which covers the second chapter of book 11, is of the three texts under discussion, the most extensive, the

clearest and the most critical. All aspects, dealt with by the Rhetor, turn up in Quintilian, plus a number of additions, partly based on Cicero, partly arising from his practical experience in rhetorical education. The whole chapter breathes a certain hesitation regarding the value of the system of the *loci*. There is no hint of dogma. Quintilian is concerned to a far greater degree than the Rhetor, with the different approaches needed for pupils of different dispositions.

In the first paragraphs, in which Quintilian discusses, among other things, the relationship *ars-natura*, *natura* is right from the start valued most. Precisely what function Quintilian attributes to the *ars* is not quite clear.⁶ The phrasing in §9 *quod et ipsum argumentum est subesse artem aliquam (...) cum idem docti facere illud* (to recite long arguments by heart) *indocti inexercitati non possimus* rules out, that Quintilian denies the existence of an *ars memoriae* altogether, but especially in the §§ 5-7 strong emphasis is put on the spontaneous and accidental nature of the memory, and the reference in §6 to the memory of animals originates directly from the camp of the opponents of mnemotechnics.⁷ This does not mean that Quintilian attaches less importance to the memory than the Rhetor. He concludes the second paragraph, a short *laus memoriae*, with the words *neque immerito thesaurus hic eloquentiae dicitur*. Quintilian introduces a new element, when he speaks about the value of *memoria* with regard to improvisation, when the thought overtakes the words, and the discoveries are entrusted to the *memoria* (*quasi media quaedam manus acceptum ab inventione tradit elocutioni*).⁸

After a long digression on Simonides as εὐρετής of mnemotechnics (11-17), to which I will return when I discuss Cicero, the real τεχνολογία follows in the §§ 18-22, introduced by the remark that everyone knows from experience, that places can evoke associations with events which took place there, and even with unspoken thoughts. We did not find this explanation in the Rhetor; he only emphasized the order. Indeed, I don't think this observation quite appropriate, for when there is a set of associations between a *locus* and a specific *imago*, an error can easily be made when that same *locus* is later needed for another *imago*.⁹ The τεχ-

⁶ The text in §4, in which Quintilian undoubtedly formulates scepticism (*neque ero tam credulus ut ...*) is not certain. The reading in the recent Budé-edition (1979, Cousin) is not acceptable because it contradicts §9.

⁷ Aelian. *Nat. an.* 6 Μέμνηται δὲ ὧν πάσχει τὰ ζῶα, καὶ δεῖται γε τέχνης τῆς ἐς τὴν μνήμην οὐ Σιμωνίδου, οὐχ Ἰππίου, οὐ Θεοδέκτου.

⁸ A surprising remark about the importance of a good memory for improvisation in Marrou 299: 'ne le constatons-nous pas dans la technique *hot* de notre musique de jazz?'

⁹ The problem created by possible interference between consecutive sets of *imagines* is

λογία itself is clear, thanks to the explicit examples given by Quintilian. As *regio* he mentions a house, as *loci* in it the *vestibulum*, the *atrium*, the *impluvia* etc., in each of which images can be ‘written in’ and later ‘read back’. His *imagines* do not tax one’s visual imagination half as much as those of the Rhetor. Quintilian speaks of *signa ex re tota* (like an anchor for sailing, a spear for war) and *signa ex verbo aliquo*, when one single word, or rather its *imago* has to evoke a whole range of thoughts. When one has to remember names, Quintilian advises (30-31) to link those names to famous people (Fabius to Fabius Cunctator) or else to use their etymology: *ut in Cicerone (cicer)*, *Verrio (verres)*, *Aurelio* (Paul. Fest. 18 *aurelius a sole dictus*).

The remaining paragraphs contain Quintilian’s verdict on the system of the *loci*; this verdict is cautious: *ad quaedam prodesse non negaverim*. It may serve a useful purpose when memorizing the names of a series of objects, but he does not find it very helpful with regard to a continuous argument. This applies to the thoughts (*sensus*), a simple representation of which cannot serve as an *imago*, as well as to the *verborum contextus*. Even if we accept briefly, that we might have at our disposal an unlimited number of *loci* and *imagines*, also for non-referential words like conjunctions, even then the system would not work, because the *dicendi cursus*, the fluent delivery, would suffer too much from what Quintilian calls the *duplex memoriae cura*. Anyway, Quintilian rejects the *verborum memoria* not only because it does not work in practice, but, as will become clear later, even more for a fundamental reason. In §§ 36-9 he argues, that we will find the strongest support for memorization in a good *dispositio* and *compositio*. We should interpret the first one as a rational analysis of the case in question; regarding the second one we should think of a word order, determined by considerations of euphony and prose-rhythm.¹⁰ Evidently, Quintilian does not have a high opinion of mnemotechnics where separate words are reproduced as an incoherent series, and prefers a method for memorization, which uses the internal consistency of an argument as well as the rhythm of the sentences.

The *verborum memoria* with the aid of *loci* is thus rejected by Quintilian for practical and fundamental reasons, but he also ascribes a limited use to this technique with regard to the *res*. He puts forward alter-

not discussed in the classical sources. A source dating from the 16th century (Blum 1969, 37 nt. 171) advises to give a different colour to the *loci* when re-using them.

¹⁰ Leeman 1963 about *divisio* 232 and 234, about *compositio* 149-55 and 307-10.

native suggestions, introduced by the words *nos simpliciora tradamus* (§26), in which he advocates the use of simple *imagines* as mentioned above only for those passages *quae difficiliter haereant* (§28). His directions regarding memorization are of the utmost practicality and will hardly surprise the modern reader. One should divide the text into manageable units and learn it by heart by murmuring softly, so that the audible memory is engaged as well. There is a remnant left in Quintilian of the intense demand made on the visual memory characteristic of the *loci*: he advises to use the original, personally written text during the process of memorization. Quintilian gambles on what we would call the photographic memory, and thus avoids the detour of associations evoked by *imagines*. However, by far the most important are *exercitatio* and *labor*. Children must learn to conquer their reluctance to work continuously at the same text and to chew the same food over and over again (*taedium illud (...) quasi eundem cibum remandendi*, §41). In the concluding paragraphs (50-1) Quintilian mentions a number of historical characters, who had an exceptional memory, one of whom was Theodectes, who could repeat an unlimited number of lines just like that. In Quintilian's final sentence the ironic detachment, characteristic of the whole treatise, can be heard clearly: I have not personally come across such miracles of memory, *habenda tamen fides est ut qui crediderit et speret*.

The distance between the Rhetor and Quintilian is big. Whereas the Rhetor only expressed reservation regarding ready-made offerings of large quantities of *verborum imagines*, in Quintilian this reservation includes the *rerum memoria* with the aid of *loci* as a whole. The reader is left with the impression that although Quintilian was not prepared to push traditional mnemotechnics aside totally, he allotted only a marginal role to it. There is in Quintilian no trace of the complex and spectacular *imagines* of the Rhetor, and from his remark about the relationship between *loci* and *imagines* we do not get the impression, to put it mildly, that Quintilian was a practising mnemonist. Finally, Quintilian's own instructions regarding memorization catch the eye, because they appeal to the pupil's intellect and feeling for style, rather than to his powers of visual imagination.

Finally Cicero, *De orat.* 2.350-60. It is significant that, of the eleven paragraphs, strictly speaking only three (354, 358-9) are devoted to mnemotechnics. In the first two paragraphs Antonius announces that after *inventio* and *dispositio* he will also take on *memoria*. Crassus will then 'only' have to deal with *quibus haec exornentur*, i.e. *elocutio* and *actio*. In

the §§ 352-3 Antonius narrates quickly and vividly the well-known anecdote about Simonides, who, after the collapse of the dining room, from which he had just been called away by the Dioscuri, was able to identify the corpses of his fellow-diners, mangled beyond recognition, because he could accurately visualize the seating plan. On the basis of this experience Simonides had allegedly invented the principle of mnemotechnics.¹¹ As a matter of fact, the relationship between the anecdote and the fully developed system is incomplete, for Simonides' discovery shows no more than the support given to the memory by a visual impression. Had an unstructured list of names been recited to Simonides he would, in all likelihood, not have been able to remember the names. Because he remembered the seating plan he could.

The second element of mnemotechnics, the *imagines*, is as yet missing in the story about Simonides. Cicero distinguishes the two elements very carefully in §354: *sic fore ut ordinem rerum locorum ordo conservaret, res autem ipsas effigies notaret*. I assume, that for this very reason Cicero keeps his options open when he examines the *imagines* in §357: *sive Simonides sive alius quis invenit*.

After briefly mentioning the *loci* and the *imagines* Antonius interrupts the discussion for a short *laus memoriae* in §355. It is clear that a forensic expert is talking here, from the careful distinction drawn between the consecutive stages in a process, in which the memory plays a part: during the preliminary investigation, whilst preparing the speech for the defence, and during the trial itself, when the orator must be able to remember his adversary's arguments, and must have at his disposal a large number of precedents.

In §357, after a rather conventional treatment of the relationship between *ars* and *natura*, there follows a fundamental exposition of the foundations of mnemotechnics. Cicero is the only one who explicitly formulates, that the visual memory must be involved to record what we have heard and thought, because the eye is the most powerful of the senses: *acerrimum (...) esse sensum videndi*. He continues *ut res caecas et ab aspectus indicio remotas conformatio quaedam et imago et figura ita notaret, ut e.q.s.* The least usual of the three words, *conformatio*, deserves special attention. Cicero uses it again in 3.201: *conformationem verborum et sententiarum* with regard to the tropes, or more precisely the *figurae verborum* and – *sententiarum*. Is there a connection between

¹¹ Simonides as εὐρετής first in Callim. frg. 64 Pf. l. 10 καὶ μνήμην πρῶτος ὃς ἐφρασάμην. Further parallels in Matthes 1958, 212.

this stylistically technical meaning of *conformatio* and its meaning in a mnemotechnical context? More than likely, yes. There is a similarity between creating *imagines* of invisible objects and inventing a striking simile or metaphor. *Mutatis mutandis* one can say the same about the *imago* as about the metaphor: *in singulis verbis res ac totum simile conficitur* (*De orat.* 3.160) and the remark which follows also has a familiar ring: *omnis translatio (...) ad sensus ipsos admovetur, maxime oculorum, qui est sensus acerrimus*. Without explicitly stating the connection between the ‘imagery’ of the metaphor and the *imago*, Cicero makes it clear by his choice of words that the issue here concerns related mental processes. This becomes even clearer in §358, where Antonius says that the skill to create effective images is the result of *exercitatio* and of *similium verborum conversa et immutata casibus aut traducta ex parte ad genus notatio*. Blum, who discusses this sentence in detail on pp. 123–30, points out that *immutare* and *traducere ex parte ad genus* are technical terms belonging to the theory of tropes, used by Cicero himself (*De orat.* 3.167) for respectively the metonymy and the synecdoche. We can add to this that the immediately following words *et unius verbi imagine totius sententiae informatio* have their parallel in the quotation mentioned above (3.160) from Cicero’s discussion about the tropes.

We find the distinction between *memoria rerum* and – *verborum* also in Cicero. The latter, according to Antonius, is less vital;¹² the first, however, is essential for the orator. According to Antonius, the system of the *loci* can be extremely useful for this. Therefore he rejects the criticism of the *inertes*, who think that the memory will collapse under the load of the *imagines*. His personal experience with the miraculous memory men Charmadas and Metrodorus has convinced him of the efficacy of mnemotechnics.

Antonius’ remark about the value of *verborum* resp. *rerum memoria* helps to answer the question why Cicero lets Antonius discuss the *memoria* before the *elocutio* and the *actio*, which are assigned to Crassus. Since this division of labour corresponds with the distinction between *res* and *verba* (although Crassus, in 3.17, had seriously objected to this dichotomy) the *memoria* is classed with the *res*. This is not self-evident. In his *Partit. orat.* 3 Cicero classifies *inventio* and *dispositio* under the heading *res*, *elocutio* and *actio* under *verba*, whilst *memoria* as *custos*

¹² In his note ad loc. Wilkins points out Cato’s well-known advice: *rem tene, verba sequentur*. Regarding Antonius’ confident *minus est nobis necessaria* we may think of Cicero’s statement in *Att.* 12.52.5 about the *verba (...) quibus abundo*.

omnium (Quint. *Inst.* 3.3.7) holds everything together.¹³ The fact that Cicero in *De orat.* only assigns a role to the *memoria* for the *res* is probably related to his low opinion of the *verborum memoria*.

Next to this consideration with regard to content a consideration *a persona* undoubtedly plays a part: in the *Brutus* we read about Antonius (§139) *erat memoria summa*. And although in the field of *elocutio* he had to acknowledge Crassus as his superior, he did excel in one respect, namely *in sententiarum ornamentis et conformationibus* (§140). Thus we find the *memoria* and the *conformatio* united in the person of Antonius, the two forms of ‘imagery’, which he had so surprisingly linked together in his discussion of mnemotechnics.

Of the three texts about this subject Cicero’s extremely condensed treatment of mnemotechnics is at the same time the least informative and the most illuminating. The least informative insofar as we could not possibly understand his description of the system without the accompanying treatises in *Rhet. Her.* and Quintilian. The most illuminating in that his reflection about principles and the way the system works shows the greatest depth.

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¹³ See regarding the order in which the *officia* are dealt with by the various authors Adamietz 1966, 89.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PREFACE TO LIVY'S *AB URBE CONDITA*

The classical historian, just like the epic poet, tends to stay in the background in the historical narrative. In his preface, however, he addresses his audience or reader directly, stating who he is, which period he has chosen, and what he aims to achieve with his work. For this reason the prefaces have been studied with special attention to gain insight into the motivation of the authors and their method.¹ This also applies to Livy's preface to *Ab urbe condita*.² From the start this preface strikes a very personal note. In the first sentence there are no fewer than six verb forms in the first person singular, and in §10 Livy addresses the reader directly with *te* and *tibi*. Yet it would be wrong to regard this preface as a highly individualistic and isolated comment of the author about himself. Just like his Greek and Latin predecessors, all of whom, so he claims, he has read, Livy works his way through a number of *topoi* which are part of the obligatory themes at the start of a work of history. As will become clear later, he does this by means of a continuous dialogue with Sallust. From a comparison with Sallust's preface to the *Historiae*, Livy's stance with regard to Sallust becomes clear.

The preface falls into two parts of roughly equal length, and concludes with a rather laboured, hypothetically formulated prayer asking for a blessing on the work. In the first part (§1-6) Livy talks about his insecurity as to whether he will be able to complete the task he has undertaken successfully, considering its weight and magnitude.³ The second part (§7-12) with the questions posed by Rome's earliest times and – what according to Livy is absolutely vital – the salutary effect which the study of, in particular, ancient history can have for

¹ General works about this subject are Avenarius 1956; Janson 1964; Herkommer 1968. One can find many general observations in Leeman 1973.

² See Leeman 1967; Oppermann 1967; Walsh 1967; Moles 1993.

³ For this modesty *topos* cf. Sal. *Jug.* 4.1-2 *in primis magno usui est memoria rerum gestarum. quoniam de virtute quia multi dixere, praetereundum puto, simul ne per insolentiam quis existimet memet studium meum laudando extollere* ('Historiography is extremely useful. I think it best to remain silent about its great value, as so many have spoken about it, and also in order to prevent people from thinking that I unashamedly sing the praises of my chosen occupation').

Livy's contemporaries, who have experienced the collapse of the public morale of Rome. Unlike Sallust, Livy does not conclude his preface in a mood of doom and gloom, but ends with appealing to Rome's traditional deities.

A poetical opening

With his opening sentence *facturusne operae pretium sim, si a primordio urbis res populi Romani perscripserim, nec satis scio nec, si sciam, dicere ausim*, Livy links two totally different things.⁴ On the one hand he informs his reader where he will start his history – this is usual in a preface – on the other hand he acts all modest – and that is most unusual in prefaces to historical works. His insecurity as to whether he will successfully complete the task is caused entirely by his decision to start *a primordio urbis*. After all, Rome's earliest history has been described by many before him (*quippe qui cum veterem tum volgatam rem esse videam*).⁵ By nevertheless choosing as his starting point Rome's origins, Livy distances himself from his two immediate predecessors, Asinius Pollio and Sallust, who shortly before him had made a big impression with their work about the recent past.

Quintilian already noted disapprovingly (*Inst.* 9.4.75) that Livy's first words sound like the beginning of a hexameter (*facturusne operae pretium sim*), because it is not right to use the beginning of a line of poetry to start a sentence. It is not certain whether this half line of poetry also contains a reference to Ennius, although an association with the lines *audire est operae pretium procedere recte / qui rem Romanam Latiumque augescere vultis* (494-5 Skutsch)⁶ at the start of a work about the origins and growth of the Roman state would not be far-fetched. Besides, it would not be the only reminder of the poet of the *Annales*, for in §9, where Livy speaks about Rome's beginnings, the words *quae vita, qui mores fuerint, per quos viros ... partum et auctum imperium sit*

⁴ 'Whether I will achieve anything worthwhile if I record the history of the Roman people from the foundation of the city I do not know and if I did know I would not dare to say so.'

⁵ In his commentary Greenough 1976 interprets *rem* as *eo modo gloriari*. This is not plausible, considering the continuation in §4 *res est praeterea*, where *res* without a doubt refers to the subject, i.e. the history of Rome.

⁶ 'It is worth hearing for those of you who want Rome to make good progress and Latium to expand.' The similarity is noticed by Lundström 1915.

call to mind the famous *moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque* (156 Sk.).⁷

Livy's insecurity I: the competitors

As the first reason for his insecurity Livy mentions the large number and the quality of the predecessors with whom he has to compete. Again and again new authors present themselves, presuming that they will surpass the primitive historians of olden times either by presenting more reliable facts, or because of their greater literary qualities (*dum novi semper scriptores aut in rebus certius aliquid allaturos se aut scribendi arte rudem vetustatem superaturos credunt*). One wonders which authors Livy might have had in mind. Probably not the above mentioned Asinius Pollio and Sallust (thus Leeman 1973, 202), who only concerned themselves with recent history, but other historians, who started from the foundation of Rome, for instance, in Livy's own time or shortly before, Aelius Tubero and Valerius Antias. It is interesting that Livy draws a dividing line between factual information and artistic presentation. Since so much emphasis is put these days on the predominantly artistic side of classical historiography, one does well to note that Livy also mentions as an aim of the historian *certius aliquid offerre*. With the words *iuuabit ... rerum gestarum memoriae principis terrarum populi pro virili parte et ipsum consuluisse*, with which he continues, Livy aligns himself (*et ipsum*) with the *novi scriptores*, although he expresses himself more modestly than they do. 'To make a contribution to the history of Rome to the best of one's ability' sounds a lot less brash than 'to presume that they will surpass their predecessors.'

Does Livy also presume to present *certius aliquid*? The answer differs depending on the period discussed. As the continuation of the preface shows, Livy is fully aware that there is very little that can be said with certainty about the earliest history up until the capture and fire of Rome in 390. When he is about to deal with the period after 390 in book 6 he draws the reader's attention to the difference: *clariora deinceps certioraque ab secunda origine ... gesta domi militiaeque exponentur*.⁸ Much as Livy falls short with regard to the consultation of primary sources also when describing this later period, not only according to modern stan-

⁷ 'Rome is established on the customs and the people of olden times.'

⁸ 'Clearer and more certain are the events after the second birth of the city, of which I will give an account from now on.' See the excellent commentary of C.S. Kraus 1994.

dards, but also in comparison with more 'investigative' historians from Antiquity, like Thucydides, Polybius and Tacitus,⁹ he is not totally without critical faculties when assessing his literary sources. Particularly his main Latin source, Valerius Antias is regularly corrected by him, either for intrinsic reasons or by comparing other sources.¹⁰ We must assume that, as Livy approached his own time, he had more of a chance to assert himself in this respect.

Ars scribendi: Livy and Cicero I

However, Livy's greatest merits lie in his *ars scribendi*. In this respect he was the first to fulfil the requirements formulated by Cicero with regard to historiography in *de Orat.* 2.62-4, about 25 years before he began to write. As the first rule for the genre of historiography Cicero mentions the *veritas*, about which more will be said in reference to §5. In Cicero's own words this forms the basis, on top of which the structure of the historical narrative must be built. As is evident from the way in which he deals with the requirements regarding this superstructure (*exaedificatio*), Cicero has in mind both the *ratio rerum*, the elements regarding the content needed for a good *narratio*, like chronological order, description of the area etc., and the *ratio verborum*, the style in a narrower sense. In other words, the *exaedificatio* incorporates the total transformation from the base facts to a literarily acceptable historical narrative. In this respect one can, for instance, think of the insertion of geographical digressions, speeches and character sketches.¹¹ As regards the *ratio verborum* Cicero for a work of history requires a *genus orationis fusum atque tractum et cum levitate quadam aequabiliter profluens sine hac iudiciali asperitate et sine sententiarum forensibus aculeis*.¹² Asinius Pollio and Sallust had rejected this stylistic ideal; Livy, who had a boundless

⁹ See for this Luce 1977, xv-xxvii and Walsh 1961, in particular chapter 6: 'Livy's Historical Methods'. Jenkins 1995 offers a provocative introduction into modern historiographical opinions.

¹⁰ An amusing example can be found in 39.43.1-3, where Livy corrects his primary source Valerius Antias with the aid of a speech of Cato Maior.

¹¹ In emphasising the aspects concerning the content of *exaedificatio* I follow Woodman 1988, who in the fourth chapter of his book on Classical Historiography entitled *Theory: Cicero* argues comprehensively that according to Cicero the task of the *orator*, who wants to deal with historiography, is not restricted to style (*elocutio*), but belongs just as much to the *inventio* when working out what makes a *narratio* a convincing and appealing entity.

¹² 'The type of language should be broad and expansive, flowing steadily with a certain

admiration for Cicero as an orator,¹³ makes it his own.

Whereas Cicero in *de Oratore* still spoke about Roman historiography as a wasteland, Livy continues his argument by speaking about *tanta scriptorum turba*, 'so great a crowd of writers'. The explanation for this difference is not only the fact that after the dramatic date of *de Oratore*, 91 BC, many authors ventured out into this field, amongst whom younger annalists like Valerius Antius, but also that Cicero considered quite a few older Latin historians not worthy of the name in comparison with their Greek colleagues. Anyway, Livy's statement is a variation on Sallust, who had written in the preface to his *Histories* about *tanta doctissimorum hominum copia*.¹⁴ This is not the first allusion to Sallust in this preface¹⁵ and many, more important, ones are to follow. The way in which Livy consoles himself should he not be noticed amongst his many competitors (*si in tanta scriptorum turba mea fama in obscura sit*) is for a modern reader almost embarrassing: *nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum me qui nomini officient meo consoler*.¹⁶ In all likelihood, *nobilitas* here will have to be understood in its social meaning 'pre-eminence', 'aristocracy'. Livy is aware that socially speaking he is far inferior to his predecessors, who for the most part have belonged to the senatorial order.¹⁷

Livy's insecurity II: the scope of his work and the interest of the readers

Whereas the first reason for Livy's insecurity was the number and greatness of his competitors, a second source of insecurity is created on the

smoothness, without the sharpness of a court speech and the stinging sentiments used in the forum', tr. J.M. May & J.Wisse.

¹³ Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.39 quotes from a letter of Livy to his son *legendos Demosthenen atque Ciceronem, tum ita, ut quisque esset Demostheni et Ciceroni simillimus* ('read Demosthenes and Cicero; other authors in so far as they resemble Demosthenes and Cicero').

¹⁴ 'so great a wealth of erudite men'.

¹⁵ Cf. Sal. *Hist.* fr. 8 Maurenbrecher *nam a primordio urbis ad bellum Persi Macedonicum* with 1.1 *a primordio urbis*, fr. 1M *res populi Romani ... composui* with *ibid.*: *res populi Romani perscripserim*. The fragments of the *Historiae* are easily accessible in the edition of P. McGushin 1992 resp. 1994. Alas only in translation, but with extensive commentary.

¹⁶ 'then I will console myself with the distinction and excellence of those who will put me in the shade.' Moles (1993, 145) suggests that there is irony in Livy's choice of words. This is a desperate move which cannot be reconciled with the deadly serious nature of this preface (and of Livy's work as a whole). Ogilvie's *dictum* 'No touches of humour are to be found in the history' (1965, 4) is, I fear, correct.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the concepts *nobilitas* and *magnitudo* see Miles 1995, 52-4.

one hand by the work itself, on the other hand by the anticipated reaction of the readers: *res est praeterea et immensi operis ... et legentium plerisque* etc. *Res* is vague and should in the first instance be specified as 'the history of Rome', which, because of the length of time it covered, is very labour-intensive (*immensi operis*). In the second half of the sentence a more likely interpretation is 'Rome', which has grown from humble beginnings so much, that it is in danger of collapsing under its own weight (*ab exiguis profecta initiis eo creverit, ut iam magnitudine laboret sua*).¹⁸ The shift in meaning suggests that Livy identifies his description of Roman history, consciously or otherwise, with the described object, the Roman state, as if, to put it differently, this state keeps expanding under his hands. Something similar is noticeable in the preface to book 31, where Livy states: *me quoque iuvat, velut ipse in parte laboris ac periculi fuerim, ad finem belli Punici pervenisse*.¹⁹

The notion that the Roman state is in danger of becoming the victim of its own greatness is found in several other authors, always in the context of the civil wars.²⁰ This is a first indication of Livy's gloomy view of Rome's predicament, a sentiment which as the preface develops will be revealed more and more clearly.

The final reason for Livy's insecurity appears to be his belief that most of his readers will have very little interest in the earliest history, and will impatiently look forward to *haec nova, quibus iam pridem praevalentis populi vires se ipsae conficiunt*.²¹ It is impossible to ascertain whether Livy had reason to believe this. In my opinion it is more than likely that he was first and foremost concerned with the contrast to his own attitude, which he introduces with *ego contra*. Anyway, *haec nova*, the contemporary history, again conjures up an association with 'Zeitgeschichte' and Sallust. Therefore, as I see it, the words *iam pridem praevalentis populi* have to be regarded as a reference to this author, since he had synchronized the beginning of Rome's decline with the moment in

¹⁸ Woodman (1988, 132) speaks aptly of the 'dinosaur syndrome'. Wheeldon (1989, 58) sees *iam magnitudine laboret sua* as a comment about the historical narrative itself. Moles (1993, 164 n.23) objects rightly that such a comment is unthinkable at the beginning of the work.

¹⁹ 'I, too, am pleased to have arrived at the end of the Punic War, as if I had been a part of the trials and tribulations.'

²⁰ Prop. 3.13.60 *frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis*, Sen. *Constant. Sap.* 2.2 *vitia civitatis degenerantis et pessum sua mole sidentis*, Luc. 1.71-2 *nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus / nec se Roma ferens*. See Dutoit 1936.

²¹ 'Our own time, in which the powers of the people, since long supreme, are destroying themselves.' Cf. Hor. *Epod.* 16.2 *suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit*.

time when Rome had disposed of its last serious rival, Carthage.²²

Livy describes his own attitude as being the opposite of that of his contemporaries. To enter into the earliest history is a consolation for him: *ego contra hoc quoque laboris praemium petam, ut me a conspectu malorum quae nostra tot per annos vidit aetas tantisper certe dum prisca illa tota mente repeto, avertam*.²³ At first sight this seems a nostalgic, not to say escapist attitude, for which Livy ostensibly apologizes (*tantisper certe*). However, as the preface develops (§9-10), it will become clear that Livy is convinced that the intensive study of Rome's early history has much more than just sentimental value. The words also show Livy's inclination to identify totally with his subject, as has been pointed out before. He also gives evidence of this more than once in the actual historical narrative. Thus for instance in 43.13.2, where he introduces a series of *prodigia*, which his cynical contemporaries would probably have mocked, like a talking cow, which was fed by the state, with the words *mihi vetustas res scribenti nescio quo pacto antiquus fit animus*.²⁴

In my opinion Livy's disclosure signifies also a veiled criticism of his readers. After all, the modern era, which they are so impatiently awaiting, is a time in which the Roman people are destroying themselves as Livy himself puts it: *desiderium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perdendique omnia*.²⁵ This fascination has a morbid side. How much better, not to say, in anticipation of §10, how much more salutary, to emulate the distant past!

Dealing with history has an added advantage for Livy (*quoque*, i.e. apart from the satisfaction of having contributed to writing the history of Rome, of which he had spoken in §3). For he can do this *omnis expers curae quae scribentis animum etsi non flectere a vero, sollicitum tamen efficere posset*.²⁶ In this way the *veritas*-topos, one of the obligatory motifs in the preface, is concluded, be it rather summarily. It is clear that *veritas* here does not mean 'truth' in the sense of factual correctness. If

²² Thus for instance in *Cat.* 10.1. In Livy the thought is expressed by no less a person than Hannibal: *nulla magna civitas diu quiescere potest; si foris hostem non habet, domi invenit, ut praevalida corpora ab externis causis tuta videntur, sed suis ipsa viribus onerantur* (30.44.8).

²³ 'I, on the other hand, will be seeking this additional reward for my labours, that I turn away from the sight of the misery, witnessed for so many years by my generation, if only for the short time when I try to immerse myself totally in the earliest history.'

²⁴ 'whilst jotting down these events of long ago I sometimes feel myself turning into an old Roman.'

²⁵ 'the desire to perish in luxury and lust and to destroy everything', §12.

²⁶ 'without any worries, which although they would not prevent me from telling the truth might make me self-conscious'.

that were the case, ancient history would have created particularly insoluble problems for the author. For Livy *veritas* means 'impartiality' with regard to the historical characters under discussion. Tacitus and Sallust treat this concept in the same way. Here, too, Livy models himself on Sallust, who had written in the preface to his *Histories*: *neque me diversa pars in civilibus armis movit a vero*.²⁷ The demand for *veritas* is easily satisfied when describing the era of the kings and the early republic. The fact that Livy regards it as adequate to deal with this topos in this way also shows that this preface was not so much conceived as an introduction to and a justification of the whole of his work, including the description of Livy's own time, but that Livy, when he wrote it, was only thinking of the first pentad.

History and poetry: Livy and Cicero II

The link between the first and second part of the preface is the following: the earliest history does not make heavy demands as regards the *veritas*, but does pose totally different problems. This is what Livy discusses in §6: *quae ante conditam condendamve urbem poeticis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur, ea nec adfirmare nec refellere in animo est*.²⁸ The addition *condendamve* implies a restriction, as stated by the commentary of Weissenborn-Müller.²⁹ Livy focuses the attention on the run-up to the foundation of Rome as described by him in the first seven chapters of book I.³⁰ I interpret *decora* here as 'fitting', the most usual meaning in Livy, not as 'embellished'.³¹

²⁷ 'the fact that I was on the opposite side in the civil war has not prevented me from telling the truth.'

²⁸ 'The stories which are handed down about the period before the city was founded or rather before its first onset are more suitable for the fictional tales of poets than for a strictly truthful account of the events. I have no intention of saying that things happened thus, and not in any other way, nor to refute this.' This is obviously a topos, as is evident from Lucian, *Hist. conscr.* 60 μῦθος εἴ τις παρεμπέσοι, λεκτέος μὲν, οὐ μὲν πιστωτέος πάντως. With regard to stories about Odysseus visiting Germany Tacitus says *quae neque confirmare argumentis neque refellere in animo est: ex ingenio quisque demat vel addat fidem* (Ger. 3.4).

²⁹ For a modern discussion of the difference between the participle and the gerundive in constructions of this kind see Bolkestein 1980.

³⁰ It seems likely to me that with the expression *poeticae fabulae* Livy alludes to the *Aeneis* which Vergil had started at the time when according to the traditional dating the preface was being written. It might well be the reason for the intriguing addition *condendamve*.

³¹ Cf. 5.21.9 *sed in rebus tam antiquis si quae similia veri sint pro veris accipiantur, satis ha-*

Here Livy straddles the borderline between historiography and poetry, about which several theorists in classical times have voiced their opinion.³² We find a very similar train of thought in Cicero, who introduces the difference between historiography and poetry wittily in the opening discussion of *De legibus* between himself, his brother Quintus and Atticus. With reference to the ascension of Romulus and the conversations between king Numa and the nymph Egeria, about which Cicero talks with great irony, Quintus says (1.5): *Intellego te, frater, alias in historia leges observandas putare, alias in poemate*.³³ Cicero replies to this: *Quippe, cum in illa omnia ad veritatem, Quinte, referantur, in hoc ad delectationem pleraque*.³⁴ In this passage Cicero champions the same attitude towards the legendary past as Livy and advises Atticus (1.4) *ne nimis diligenter inquiras in ea quae isto modo memoriae sint prodita*.³⁵

As is clear from the way in which Livy elaborates on this in §8, he has in mind the stories about Mars as an ancestor of the Roman people, which gives him the opportunity once again to make much of the superiority of the Romans, already touched on in §3 (*principis terrarum populi*). With the words *sed haec et his similia, utcumque animadversa aut existimata erunt, haud in magno equidem ponam discrimine*.³⁶ Livy moves on to the issue which is closest to his heart, namely the moral lessons which especially the earliest history can teach us.

beam; haec ad ostentationem scenae gaudentis miraculis aptiora quam ad fidem neque adfirmare neque refellere est operae pretium ('With regard to happenings of so long ago I am content if what is likely is regarded as true. This story is better suited to the stage, which wallows in miraculous events, than that it is believable, and it is not worthwhile to confirm or refute it'), where *aptiora* is on a par with *decora* in the preface.

³² About the relationship historiography-poetry see Norden 1958⁵, 38-41; Walbank 1960; Fornara 1983, 169-70; Woodman 1988, 1-9; Paschoud 1995.

³³ 'I understand, brother, that in your opinion the rules for historiography are different from the rules for poetry.'

³⁴ 'Of course; the only criterion for the first is veritas, for poetry it is in most cases charm.'

³⁵ 'You shouldn't scrutinize such traditions too closely'. I think it better to link this passage to Cicero rather than to Herodotus, who sometimes presents the reader with versions which he himself could not vouch for, without further comments, as Moles (1993, 149) does. In my opinion he also goes too far when he wants to see an allusion to the way in which Thucydides characterizes his own work as κτήμα ἐξ αἰεί in *incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis*. Here *incorruptus* does not mean 'everlasting' and besides, Livy is speaking in general terms, not about his own work.

³⁶ 'it makes no great difference to me how such things will be considered and judged.'

'Bruder, nicht diese Töne': Livy and Sallust

In order to bring out as sharply as possible the contrast with the present, Livy first directs the attention of his reader to the decline of 'public morality'. At no other point in the preface does Livy ally himself so closely to what Sallust had written, notably in the preface to the *Histories*, as the following comparison will show:³⁷

Liv. *pr.* 9

*labente ... paulatim disciplina
velut desidentis primo mores
sequatur animo, deinde ut magis
magisque lapsi sint, tum ire
coeperint praecipites, donec ad
haec tempora, quibus nec vitia
nostra nec remedia pati possumus,
perventum est.*

Sal. *Hist.* fr. 16M

*ex quo tempore maiorum mores non
paulatim ut antea, sed torrentis modo
praecipitati; adeo iuventus luxu atque
avaritia corrupta, ut merito dicatur
genitos esse qui neque ipsi habere
possent res familiaris neque alios pati.*

Livy has substituted Sallust's metaphor of the mountain stream (*torrentis*) with that of a building, which first begins to subside (*desidentis*), then gradually falls into disrepair (*lapsi sint*) and finally collapses. When describing the present situation Livy also follows his predecessor, this time not on the level of words but in the structure of the sentences (*nec – nec* resp. *neque – neque*), where the second clause surpasses the first in seriousness. What does Livy want to achieve with this emphatic reference to his predecessor? And, next question, when did Livy write his preface, and was the situation at that moment really as hopeless as in Sallust's time?

First of all we have to admit that the text quoted above from Livy's preface does not allow for any optimistic interpretation. He paints the present in the same colours as Sallust. Livy differs from Sallust in that he does not stop at diagnosing the corrupt situation of Rome, but offers a remedy by way of describing the earliest history, from which the reader, if he is prepared to learn from it, might benefit. Since Sallust con-

³⁷ Sallust: 'From that time onwards morals no longer declined gradually, but plunged downwards like a mountain stream; the young were corrupted by luxury and greed to such a degree, that it is rightly said that a generation had arisen which was neither able to possess its own wealth, nor could endure others to possess wealth.' Livy: 'Let (the reader) contemplate how morals because of the decline in discipline first subsided, then more and more degenerated and after that started to collapse, until we have arrived at this period of time, in which we can neither endure our ailments nor their cures.'

fined himself to the recent past, he can, in spite of the idealized version of Rome which he gives in his *Catilina* and *Jugurtha*, still be compared to Livy's readers, who, because they are morbidly obsessed by the present, do not have the patience to study the first beginnings in depth.

Livy corrects the picture of Roman history as painted by Sallust in his prefaces in two places. Ogilvie has pointed out in his commentary that the *ambitio* which in Sallust (*Cat.* 10 and 11) plays such a prominent part among the *vitia*, is not mentioned in this context by Livy. He considers this to be a silent correction of Sallust's far too simplistic representation of the earliest history.³⁸ The second correction has to do with perspective. Someone who, like Livy, surveys Roman history from the very beginning, will feel that *avaritia* and *luxuria* entered the scene rather late in Rome. In the following paragraph Livy propounds this with great emphasis: *ceterum aut me amor negotii suscepti fallit, aut nulla umquam res publica nec maior nec sanctor nec bonis exemplis ditior fuit, nec in quam civitatem tam serae avaritia luxuriaque immigraverint* (§11).³⁹ He underlines this again with *nuper* in §12.

The veiled discussion with Sallust is continued up to the last paragraph. Whilst Sallust had concluded his preface to the *Jugurtha* with the words *dum me civitatis morum piget taedetque*,⁴⁰ Livy says that he finds it inappropriate to end on such a bitter note: *sed querelae ... ab initio certe tantae ordiendae rei absint*.⁴¹ Instead, he utters a prayer for success.

When did Livy write his preface?

Livy probably composed and published his work in pentads.⁴² In view of the fact that the emphasis in the preface is on the earliest history, and that book 6 opens with a new introduction, I take it that the preface is meant to be a prelude to the first pentad rather than to the whole work.

³⁸ Ogilvie 1971, 23-4. More about this in Korpany 1983 who shows with many examples that *avaritia* and *ambitio* are practically inseparable concepts since Plautus. Moles (1993, 156) mentions as the first example of *ambitio* in Livy 1.35.2 (Tarquinius Superbus!): *primus et petisse ambitiose regnum et orationem dicitur habuisse ad conciliandos plebis animos compositam*.

³⁹ 'Either love of the task I have undertaken deceives me, or there really never was a community greater, more just and richer in good examples, or into which greed and luxury entered so late.' According to Livy 39.6.7 *luxuria* entered Rome with the triumphal procession of L. Manlius Vulso after his victory over the Galatians in 187 BC.

⁴⁰ 'because the morals of our state fill me with disgust and revulsion'.

⁴¹ 'but let us at least at the start of so great an undertaking refrain from complaining'.

⁴² Thus Luce (1977, 3 sqq.) and Stadter 1972.

The year 25 is *terminus ante quem* for the first pentad, when the temple of Janus is closed by Augustus for the second time, an event not mentioned by Livy when he speaks about this temple; a *terminus post quem* does on the face of it not look difficult to pinpoint either. There are two places where Octavian Caesar is called Augustus, a title bestowed upon him in January 27.⁴³ Woodman (1988, 132) finds this too simple an argument. He argues that in paragraph 4 (*haec nova*) Livy is referring to the civil wars. 'And since Livy refers to the present time on two other occasions in the preface, at 5: *quae [mala] nostra tot per annos vidit aetas* and 9: *haec tempora quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus*, it would seem to be perverse not to maintain that these passages too refer to the civil wars. It therefore follows that Livy wrote his preface while the civil wars were still in progress: that is, before the future emperor Augustus defeated Antony at Actium.' Woodman therefore wholeheartedly accepts Luce's proposition,⁴⁴ that the two places where Augustus is mentioned are later additions, and that the preface should be dated between 35 (death of Sallust) and 31 (Actium). I happen to think that, apart from the fact that in §5 Livy is looking back, as is shown by the perfect *vidit*, this partitioning of history into a period of war and uncertainty before, and a period of peace and stability after Actium, is a periodization which the contemporaries would only have come to understand slowly and gradually. An author who reviews more than seven centuries of Roman history might well use expressions like *haec nova*, *nostra aetas*, *haec tempora*, very naturally for the whole of the period between for example the murder of Caesar and the year 25.

Should someone want to object that after 31, or rather after the triumphal procession of 29, it was no longer right to talk in such a gloomy way about the present, he should reread ode 3.6 by Horace, written in 28. In this ode Horace censures the degeneration of his contemporaries and predicts only further decline. And in 23 Horace, who as a friend of

⁴³ 1.19.3 *bis deinde post Numae regnum clausus fuit* (sc. Ianus), *semel T. Manlio consule post Punicum primum perfectum bellum, iterum, quod nostrae aetati di dederunt ut videremus, post bellum Actiacum ab imperatore Caesare Augusto pace terra marique parta* ('Since the rule of Numa, the Janus gate was closed twice, once during the consulate of T. Manlius when the First Punic War was over, the second time – and the gods have granted our generation to behold this – when after the battle of Actium the emperor Caesar Augustus established peace on land and on the seas'). The parenthesis is highly reminiscent of the preface §5 (*mala*) *quae nostra tot per annos vidit aetas*. The second instance is in 4.20.7 *Augustum Caesarem, templorum omnium conditorem aut restitutorem* ('Augustus Caesar, founder or restorer of all the temples').

⁴⁴ Luce 1965. It is not possible to discuss this here. I am not convinced by Luce's arguments.

Maecenas was much closer to Augustus than Livy, published this poem as the finale of the Roman cycle. Apparently this could be done, at least during the beginning of Augustus' reign, without posing a risk to the author. I see therefore no reason to depart from the traditional dating of the first pentad between 27 and 25.

Livy and Augustus

There is no *communis opinio* as to how Livy saw Augustus, for the books 121-142, in which Livy described the period between 42 and 9 BC are lost. The *periocha* of book 121 (book 120 concluded with the murder of Cicero) starts with the words *qui editus post excessum Augusti dicitur*.⁴⁵ It makes sense to assume that Livy, when describing the years after 42, related events of which Augustus would rather not be reminded. Not much more can be deduced from the *periochae* except perhaps that Livy's focus was on foreign policy and in particular on the conquests made during Augustus' reign. External data are just as rare. The most interesting is Tacitus' remark in *Ann.* 4.34, that Augustus called Livy a *Pompeianus* (i.e. a 'republican') without this harming their friendship (*neque id amicitiae eorum offecit*). Equally, the remark in Suetonius' *Life of Claudius* 41.1, that Livy encouraged the young prince to write history, points to a good relationship with the imperial family.

Several authors have hunted for references to Augustus in the descriptions of characters from the early Republic. The most systematic research of this kind can be found in Von Haehling's study of 1989, who is of the opinion that such references can indeed be found in large numbers, and that one should conclude from these, that Livy saw Augustus as vital for the salvation of Rome, without, however, idealizing him.

However, the most important argument for assuming that Livy's attitude towards Augustus was positive lies in the general trend of his work, in which he systematically praises the *priscae virtutes*, and time and again underlines the importance of concord between the citizens, also with regard to an expansive foreign policy, sentiments which admirably suited Augustus' regime. During the period that Livy wrote his preface he was obviously not yet certain at all that things had taken a definitive turn for the better. It is likely that the unimaginably long reign of Augustus increasingly convinced him of this.

⁴⁵ 'which is said to have been published after the death of Augustus'.

The remedia for the Roman people

Livy's comment at the end of §9 about the remedies, which Rome was not able to swallow also played a part in the discussion about the dating of the preface. Dessau (1903) saw in this a hint at the marriage laws of the future Augustus in 28, which he had to withdraw within the year. Apart from the dubious historicity of this attempt (Badian 1985) it would be 'both pathetic and bathetic', to quote Moles, to assume that Livy only thought of a failed law whilst painting a dramatic picture of his time. However, both in Livy's work and in that of other authors *remedium* is used to indicate the only remedy left during political crises, and that is an absolute ruler. Thus Livy writes in 3.20.8 *non ita civitatem aegram esse ut consuetis remediis sisti posset; dictatore opus esse rei publicae, ut, qui se moverit ad sollicitandum statum civitatis, sentiat sine provocatione dictaturam esse*.⁴⁶ The best parallel is Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* 28.6: πολλοὶ δὲ ἦσαν οἱ καὶ λέγειν ἐν μέσῳ τολμῶντες ἥδη πλὴν ὑπὸ μοναρχίας ἀνήκεστον εἶναι τὴν πολιτείαν, καὶ τὸ φάρμακον τοῦτο χρῆναι τοῦ πραοτάτου τῶν ἱατρῶν ἀνασχέσθαι προσφέροντος, ὑποδηλοῦντες τὸν Πομπήιον,⁴⁷ which proves that the expression was already used during the conflict between Pompey and Caesar. Moles accepts the equation *remedium* – absolute power, but rightly asks how one should interpret the plural. In all the quotations the word refers to the absolute power itself which makes it even less acceptable to interpret *remedia* as measures taken by the absolute ruler. Considering the fact that the term was also used in the conflict between Caesar and Pompey, I hazard the assumption that one should think of the dictator Caesar as well as Augustus. In that case this would be a hint at Caesar's murder and at the possible opposition to Augustus. Moles himself looks for the answer to his question in the text which immediately follows, where Livy persists with the metaphor of illness and cure when he writes: *hoc*

⁴⁶ 'The illness of the citizens was of such a nature that it could not be cured by the usual medicines. The state needed a dictator, so that whoever showed signs of disturbing the peace, would realize that under a dictatorship there is no possibility to appeal.' We find the same sentiments in 22.8.5 *itaque ad remedium iam diu neque desideratum nec adhibitum, dictatorem dicendum, civitas confugit* ('Therefore the citizens resorted to a cure which they hadn't needed and hadn't applied for a long time, the appointment of a dictator') and in Tacitus *Ann.* 1.9.4 (a review about Augustus!) *non aliud discordantis patriae remedium fuisse quam ut ab uno regeretur* ('There was no other remedy for the strife-torn country than to be ruled by one man').

⁴⁷ 'and many even dared to say in public that only absolute power would be able to cure the state and that one should accept this remedy when offered by the gentlest doctor, by which they hinted at Pompey'.

*illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri.*⁴⁸ The second cure for the ills of the present would then be the study of ancient history, and in particular of Livy's own work. It is an ingenious explanation; I put it before the reader for consideration, because I do not intend (and have no opportunity) to *adfirmare* or *refellere* this explanation.

With the words just quoted Livy expresses the moralizing purpose of his work. By doing so he is no different from his Greek and Roman predecessors for whom historiography's *utile* was a given.⁴⁹ Here, too, there is a meaningful reminder of Sallust: *Jug. 4.5 nam saepe ego audiui Q. Maxumum, P. Scipionem, praeterea civitatis nostrae praeclaros viros solitos ita dicere, quom maiorum imagines intuerentur, vehementissime sibi animum ad virtutem adcendi.*⁵⁰ With this allusion Livy puts himself on a par with the 'Ahnengalerie' of the noblest Roman families, and expresses his wish that his readers will be similarly effected.

The openly chauvinistic tone of the eleventh paragraph (see note 39) does, of course, raise the question whether such a biased author will actually be able to describe history in an impartial way. It is undeniable that for Livy the demand for *veritas* only applies to Roman characters from a distant past, and that for him there is nothing wrong with being biased in favour of Rome. Walsh 1967 discusses a number of places in Livy where, on the basis of the parallel tradition, it can easily be shown that Livy let himself be lured to bend the truth because of his chauvinism.

In conclusion, a few remarks about the *invocatio deorum*, with which the preface ends. According to the rhetorical handbooks, the preface has three functions: to make the reader *attentus*, *docilis* and *benevolus*, of which according to Lucianus (*hist. conscr.* 53) the third is irrelevant, probably for the reason that the historian has no need to win his audience over to a specific point of view. As Avenarius states there is, in spite of this, no shortage of historians who start with a *captatio benevolentiae*. The topos of modesty at the beginning of Livy's preface can also be interpreted in this way. An invocation of the gods would be a logical continuation of this, because according to Quintilian this also aims at pro-

⁴⁸ 'This makes the study of history salutary and fruitful more than anything else, to be able to contemplate examples of all sorts of behaviour, made manifest in a splendid monument.'

⁴⁹ An interesting comparison between Livy and Tacitus is made by Luce 1991.

⁵⁰ 'I have often heard that Quintus Maximus, Publius Scipio and other great statemen of ours were in the habit of saying that, whilst looking at the portraits of their ancestors, they were seized by a burning desire to prove their own excellence.'

pitiat the reader.⁵¹ But Livy realizes that by doing so he would cross the boundary between historiography and poetry, and therefore couches the *invocatio* in hypothetical terms. Oppermann (1967, 179) has pointed out 'Anklänge' with the preface of Vergil's *Georgica*, where Vergil in l. 21 also addresses *dique deaeque omnes* and in 40 prays: *da facilem cursum, atque audacibus adnue coeptis*,⁵² which as far as the content is concerned is parallel to *ut orsis tantum operis successus prosperos darent*.⁵³ Considering that the verbal similarity between the two texts is not striking I hesitate to speak of derivation. And it certainly goes too far to suppose with Oppermann that Octavian 'auch hinter dem Gebet des Livius steht'. Even if Livy was thinking here of the preface to the *Georgica*, he has deliberately left out the second half of that prayer, where Vergil turns to Octavian.

With this invocation of the gods the argument returns to the beginning. There Livy had posed the question whether he would succeed in obtaining recognition for his major work. He himself was reluctant to give the answer. In this final sentence he grants the last word to the gods.

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⁵¹ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.48 *nam benevolum auditorem invocatione dearum quas praesidere vaticibus creditum est ... facit* ('For he [Homer] propitiates the audience by invoking the goddesses who watch over the poets').

⁵² 'grant me an easy voyage and favour my daring venture'.

⁵³ 'to grant at the beginning of such a vast work that I may bring it to a successful close'.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALEXANDER AND ROME

It took a long time before Alexander's greatness really came home to the Romans, although they were the people who, as far as we can tell, gave him the epithet 'the Great', and it took even longer before he made an impact on individual Romans. The earliest record we have of Alexander is in Plautus' *Mostellaria*, 775-7, where the slave Tranio brackets him with Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse: *Alexandrum magnum atque Agathoclem aiunt maxumas / duo res gessisse: quid mihi fiet tertio, / qui solus facio facinora immortalia?*¹ The text is striking for two reasons. Alexander and Agathocles form a curious combination when seen through modern eyes and Alexander is here given the epithet 'the Great' for the first time, which in Greek literature we find earliest in the first century AD, in the treatise *περὶ ὕψους*. If we can believe Plutarch, Appius Claudius Caecus had already used the epithet in a speech, in 280, in which he reminds the Romans of their boast that they would have taught Alexander a lesson, had he landed in Italy: Plut. *Pyrrh.*19.1 Ποῦ γὰρ ὑμῶν ὁ πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους θρυλούμενος ἀεὶ λόγος, ὥς, εἰ παρὴν ἐκεῖνος εἰς Ἰταλίαν ὁ μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ συνηνέχθη νέοις ἡμῖν καὶ τοῖς πάτραισιν ἡμῶν ἀκμάζουσιν, οὐκ ἂν ὑμνεῖτο νῦν ἀνίκητος, ἀλλ' ἢ φυγὼν ἂν ἢ που πεσὼν ἐνταῦθα τὴν Ῥώμην ἐνδοξότεραν ἀπέλιπε;² It is of course doubtful whether Plutarch has reported the speech of the blind censor correctly. Beyond doubt is the fact that, after the Roman legions had given short shrift to the invincible Macedonian phalanx, a heated discussion took place as to whether the Romans would also have been able to stop Alexander had he marched against the West. We find a late echo of this discussion in Livy 9.17-9. Here Livy compares the numbers and strength of the armies which both sides would have deployed, the quality of the commanders and the good fortune they had met with in

¹ 'They say that Alexander the Great and Agathocles are the two men who have performed the greatest heroic deeds. How about me as a third, I, who with my bare hands have performed immortal deeds?'

² 'Where is that story now that you were always going on about to anyone who wanted to listen that if the great Alexander had come to Italy and had come across us in our youth and our fathers in their prime, his invincibility would now not be sung, but he would either have been chased away or he would have been killed there and thus would have enhanced the glory of Rome?'



Alexander the Great
(Archaeological Museum,
Istanbul)



Pompeius
(Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek,
Kopenhagen)



Mythridates VI Eupator
(Musée du Louvre, Paris)

their wars. In an argument, which in spite of the speculative and tentative nature of this digression, is nevertheless cogent, Livy explains that Rome would have been able to deploy many more troops in such a 'home tie', and that it had at its disposal a number of generals, who if not individually, then in any case together, and in the long run, would have been too strong for Alexander. Besides, the young man would undoubtedly have fallen victim to his own vices. Plutarch has acquainted us with similar views, although they lead to the opposite conclusion. The main surprise in all this is the deeply felt and long-lasting resentment of the Greeks against Rome due to their defeat.

If we disregard for a moment Scipio Africanus Minor, who was apparently mysteriously sired by a serpent, as was Alexander, then it is only in the first century BC that Alexander begins to play an important part in the imagination of some of the dynasts. Before presenting the relevant data about Pompey, Caesar and Antony, I would like to follow Peter Green in making a distinction between on the one hand *imitatio* or even *aemulatio* of Alexander, and on the other hand *comparatio* (Green 1989). We speak about the latter when others, historians, panegyrists or poets, compare somebody with Alexander. This does not necessarily say a lot about the ambitions of this person. We should only speak of *imitatio* c.q. *aemulatio* when Alexander is consciously emulated. This distinction is useful for pointing out the difference in this respect between Pompey and Caesar, who are put on a par in older studies about this subject. It was to be expected that Pompey, after his impressive successes in the East, and especially after his victory over Mithridates VI Eupator, himself a great admirer of Alexander, was proclaimed the new Alexander by his court historian Theophanes. But even

before his expedition to the East, Pompey himself had chosen Alexander as his model. He let himself be portrayed with characteristic features of Alexander, such as the ἀναστολή, the little flip of hair on his head, as we can see in the famous portrait from Copenhagen, and as Plutarch tells us in a rather sceptical tone: *Pomp.* 2.1 ἦν δέ τις καὶ ἀναστολή τῆς κόμης ἀτρέμα καὶ τῶν περὶ τὰ ὄμματα ῥυθμῶν ὑγρότης τοῦ προσώπου, ποιούσα μᾶλλον λεγομένην ἢ φαινομένην ὁμοιότητα πρὸς τὰς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως εἰκόνας.³ His admirers even lied about his age during his triumph in 61 to make him resemble Alexander more closely: 46.1-2 Ἡλικία δὲ τότε ἦν, ὥς μὲν οἱ κατὰ πάντα τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ παραβάλλοντες αὐτὸν καὶ προσβιβάζοντες ἀξιούσι, νεώτερος τῶν τριάκοντα καὶ τεττάρων ἐτῶν, ἀληθεία δὲ τοῖς τετταράκοντα προσήγεν. Ὡς ὦνιτό γ' ἂν ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου παυσάμενος, ἄχρι οὗ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τύχην ἔσχεν· ὁ δ' ἐπέκεινα χρόνος αὐτῷ τὰς μὲν εὐτυχίας ἤνεγκεν ἐπιφθόνους, ἀνηκέστους δὲ τὰς δυστυχίας.⁴ In the procession he wore – εἰ τῷ πίστον ἐστὶν as Appianus remarks drily – Alexander's cloak, which he had found among Mithridates' treasures. Pompey's career after his triumphal procession was a bitter anticlimax, which put a stop to any further development of the Alexander-*imitatio* later. We don't know whether Pompey also wanted to follow his idol in demanding divine honours. That such a development was to be expected is shown by the following text, where the Elder Pliny puts Pompey's achievements on a par with those of Alexander, and mentions in the same breath Hercules and Dionysus: *NH* 7.95 *Verum ad decus imperii Romani, non solum ad viri unius, pertinet victoriarum Pompei Magni titulos omnes triumphosque hoc in loco nuncupari, aequato non modo Alexandri Magni rerum fulgore, sed etiam Herculis prope ac Liberi patris.*⁵ I will return to this aspect of the Alexander-*imitatio* later.

Suetonius relates how Caesar, when he was quaestor in Spain, once

³ 'His hair was slightly wavy and his face around the eyes had a youthful charm, which was reminiscent of pictures of king Alexander; this likeness was talked about rather than being visible.'

⁴ 'According to those who compare him with Alexander in everything and put him on a par with him, he was at that time not yet thirty four; in reality he was nearly forty. What a blessing it would have been if his life had ended then, when he was still blessed with Alexander's good fortune! The following period brought him on the one hand success which was resented, on the other hand irreparable setbacks.'

⁵ 'It is meaningful for the honour of the entire Roman empire, not just for the odd individual, to mention at this point the whole series of victories and triumphs of Pompey the Great, by which he matched the glorious achievements of Alexander the Great, yes, even almost those of Hercules and Dionysus.'

stood in front of a statue of Alexander in the Hercules temple near Cadiz, and realized that he had not achieved anything noteworthy at an age, when Alexander had subdued the whole world. Many have used this anecdote to prove Caesar's Alexander-*imitatio*. This goes far too far. In my opinion, the sign of regret indicates only that Caesar suddenly realized that life was slipping away, surely a universal human experience. The other texts which have been put forward, from Velleius and Appianus, do not prove either that Caesar consciously imitated Alexander. Both authors list a number of similarities between the two men, and a number of remarkable parallels with regard to their achievements in war, but all this falls under the heading *comparatio*, as long as no data are added, which prove that Caesar consciously modelled his career on Alexander's example. Such data are lacking, even with regard to the last phase of Caesar's life, during his preparation for the expedition against the Parthians, when in all likelihood he considered to have himself declared king and to demand divine honours. Quite apart from his sizeable arrogance it was probably Pompey's Alexander-*imitatio*, which made this role unattractive to Caesar. And besides, it would have been somewhat ridiculous for a fifty year old Roman aristocrat to follow in the footsteps of a thirty year old hothead. And Caesar's appearance didn't help. 'Progressive baldness is a fated handicap when trying to cultivate the ἀναστολή,' if I may once again quote Peter Green.

We find an interesting example as to how Alexander was received in connection with Caesar in Lucanus. With reference to the description of Caesar's visit to Alexandria the poet devotes a long digression to the ἥρωες κτίστης of that city, of which I quote about half (10.28-46):

*Macetum fines latebrasque suorum
deseruit victasque patri despexit Athenas,
perque Asiae populos fatis urgentibus actus
humana cum strage ruit gladiumque per omnis
exegit gentes, ignotos miscuit amnes
Persarum Euphraten, Indorum sanguine Gangen,
terrarum fatale malum fulmenque quod omnis
percuteret pariter populos et sidus iniquum
gentibus. Oceano classes inferre parabat
exteriore mari. non illi flamma nec undae
nec sterilis Libye nec Syrticus obstitit Hammon.
isset in occasus mundi devexa secutus
ambissetque polos Nilumque a fonte bibisset:
occurrit suprema dies, naturaque solum*

*hunc potuit finem vaesano ponere regi.*⁶

The tone is extremely hostile. On account of his aggressiveness, his lust for power and bloodthirstiness, Lucanus sees Alexander as a predecessor of Caesar, whom he indirectly censures in this passage. He portrays Alexander as some kind of natural disaster, which, driven by fate (*fatis urguentibus* l. 28) raged across all of Asia and created countless casualties, in a word, as a *sidus iniquum gentibus* (l. 35), an ill-fated star or a doom-laden comet for the world. In this indictment we also find the theme of Alexander's 'Fernweh', his desire to go even beyond earth's boundaries and sail the oceans (l. 39-42: 'to the extreme West he would have gone, past the downward curve of the earth. Round the poles he would have gone and drunk from the Nile at its source, but his last day blocked his path. This was the only limit which nature could set for the insane ruler.') This theme was to have a great literary history and is, in the final analysis, the basis for Dante's description of Odysseus' sea voyage in canto 26 of the *Inferno*.⁷ The indictment against Alexander which we read here does not come out of the blue. As a Stoic Lucanus is part of a long tradition. In any case, Alexander had a bad reputation amongst philosophers because of the execution of Kallisthenes, Aristotle's pupil, who had accompanied him to the East. Because he was prey to his passions the Stoics saw him as the opposite of a wise man.

After this short digression I hurry back to the beginning of the empire. The attitude of Augustus towards Alexander is ambivalent. Before examining the relevant texts we have to realize that Augustus was not totally free in determining his attitude. In the person of Antony, Augustus was faced with a distinct Alexander-imitator, just as Caesar was with Pompey. In the thirties Antony had presented himself as a king in Hellenistic style, who, with the help of his brilliant general P. Ventidius had celebrated triumphs in the war against the Parthians. His ambition to

⁶ 'He left Macedonia behind, where his ancestors had hidden themselves, and he despised Athens, which had been defeated by his father. Driven on by the people of Asia, not given any peace by his fate, he rushed onwards and created carnage, his sword raged across the world. Unknown rivers, the Euphrates and the Ganges, he painted red with the blood of Persians and Indians. He was a disaster for the world, sent by fate, a thunderbolt, which struck all people indiscriminately, an unholy star for the entire earth. Across the sea in the East he wanted to sail onto the ocean in his ships. Neither fire, nor water, neither arid Libya, nor the Syrtes near Ammon could stop him. He would have gone to the extreme West along the downward curve of the earth. He would have rounded the poles and drunk from the Nile at its source, but his final day blocked his path. This was the only limit which nature could set for the madman.'

⁷ About the Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon and other Alexander stories as a source of inspiration for the Odysseus-episode in Dante see D'Arco Silvio Avalle 1975.

display himself as a ruler of the East in imitation of Alexander is, for example, shown by the fact that he called his and Cleopatra's son Alexander Helios. Moreover, he boasted about his descent from Anton, the son of Hercules, and already in 39 he presented himself during his entry into Athens as 'Neos Dionysos', clear symptoms of Alexander-*imitatio* – as regards Dionysus not only in the religious sphere but also in his drinking habits. It would have been natural if Augustus had rejected Alexander totally as a 'role model' out of protest against these oriental tendencies. And indeed, against Antony, Augustus does emphasize his special ties to Apollo, just as Caesar had opposed his descent from Mars and Venus to Pompey's Alexander-*imitatio*. But Augustus' attitude was not totally dismissive. His visit to Alexander's grave when he was in Alexandria does not mean that much. It is told by Suetonius and Cassius Dio. In the version of the biographer it runs as follows (Aug.18): *Per idem tempus conditorium et corpus Magni Alexandri, cum prolatum e penetrali subiecisset oculis, corona aurea imposita ac floribus aspersis veneratus est consultusque, num et Ptolemaeum inspicere vellet, regem se voluisse ait videre, non mortuos*.⁸ According to Cassius Dio 51.16.5: Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ μὲν τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου σῶμα εἶδε, καὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ προσήψατο, ὥστε τι τῆς ρίνός, ὡς φασι, θραυσθῆναι· τὰ δὲ δὴ τῶν Πτολεμαίων, καίτοι τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων σπουδῇ βουλευθέντων αὐτῷ δεῖξαι, οὐκ ἐθεάσατο, εἰπὼν ὅτι “βασιλέα ἀλλ’ οὐ νεκροὺς ἰδεῖν ἐπεθύμησα”.⁹ The difference between the versions of Suetonius and Dio Cassius is interesting. Both quote Augustus' down to earth remark about the Ptolemies: 'I wanted to see a king, not corpses', but Dio Cassius adds the detail that Augustus touched Alexander's head, probably to imbue himself with Alexander's strength, and broke off the nose. The remark about the Apis-bull, with which Dio concludes, looks suspiciously like an elaboration on the remark about the Ptolemies. The story, handed down by Suetonius in a long chapter about the *omina imperii* for Augustus, is much more important (Aug. 94.5): *Octavio postea, cum per secreta Thraciae exercitum duceret, in Liberi patris luco barbara caerimonia de filio consulenti, idem affirmatum est a sacerdotibus, quod infuso super altaria mero tantum*

⁸ 'At the same time, on his instructions, the sarcophagus with the body of Alexander the Great was taken out of the tomb and shown to him. He paid tribute to him by placing a golden coronet on top of the coffin and scattering flowers on it. When asked, whether he wanted to see the Ptolemies as well, he said: "I wanted to see a king, not corpses"'

⁹ 'Then he saw Alexander's body and touched it, which caused a little piece of the nose to break off, so they say. The Ptolemies he refused to look at, although the inhabitants of Alexandria were keen to show them to him, saying: "I wanted to see a king, not corpses"'

*flammae emicuisset, ut supergressa fastigium templi ad caelum usque ferretur, unique omnino Magno Alexandro apud easdem aras sacrificanti simile provenisset ostentum.*¹⁰ Several historians have supposed, that Suetonius derived this anecdote, either directly or via Livy, from the autobiography, written down by Augustus in 24. If this is correct, we have here a real *imitatio*, which Augustus possibly also wanted to express by exhibiting works of art, which had belonged to Alexander, at central points in Rome, namely near to the temple of Mars Ultor and the Regia, as we hear from Pliny the Elder (*NH.* 34.48). One has to ask why Augustus, in spite of Antony's behaviour, wanted to evoke the association with Alexander. The answer lies probably in the ambiguity inherent in the principate from the start. On the one hand Augustus posed as 'first among equals'. But in reality he was the absolute ruler over an empire at least as big as Alexander's. As such he was honoured, at his own instigation or otherwise, in terms which were influenced by the Alexander-panegyrics. A famous example of this is Vergil's prophecy of the Golden Age which would dawn under Augustus, A. 6.791-805:

*Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latium regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
proferet imperium; iacet extra sidera tellus,
extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas
axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum.
huius in adventum iam nunc et Caspia regna
responsis horrent divum et Maeotia tellus,
et septemgemi turbant trepida ostia Nili.
nec vero Alcides tantum telluris obivit,
fixerit aripedem cervam licet, aut Erymanthi
pacarit nemora et Lernam tremefecerit arcu;
nec qui pampineis victor iuga flectit habenis
Liber, agens celso Nysae de vertice tigris.*¹¹

¹⁰ 'Later, when Octavius during an expedition through the interior of Thrace, in a wood dedicated to Bacchus, consulted an oracle about his son, according to barbaric ritual, he was given the same assurance by the priests [namely that his son would rule the world]. For when the wine was poured onto the altar, the flames shot up so high, that they were seen above the roof of the temple, and reached the sky. The only person in the world, to whom the same miraculous sign was given when he sacrificed on these altars, was Alexander the Great.'

¹¹ 'This, this is he, whom thou so oft hearest promised to thee, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who shall again set up the Golden Age amid the fields where Saturn once reigned, and

Norden has pointed out that this prophecy contains a number of elements, derived from the Alexander-panegyrics, such as the reference to the Indians and to the Caspian kingdom, but particularly the comparison with Hercules, who had carried out his beneficial deeds all over the world, and with the triumphal procession of Dionysus from the Nysa, by which the association with Alexander is immediately established. We can safely assume, that such heavily ideological passages were not published without Augustus' approval, and we can conclude, that he used the Alexander-topos to strengthen his position of power, be it that Alexander is not so much depicted as the conqueror of the world, but more as the *κοσμοκράτωρ* who creates order out of chaos. Yet Augustus never advertised himself as a new Alexander in the almost naive and emphatic manner of Pompey and Antony. He valued the *imago* of the true Roman and the *mos maiorum* too highly to do so. A passage in Suetonius (*Aug.* 50) beautifully illustrates how Augustus changed over the years: *In diplomatibus libellisque et epistulis signandis initio sphinge usus est, mox imagine Magni Alexandri, novissime sua, Dioscuridis manu sculpta, qua signare insecuti quoque principes perseverarunt.*¹² A certain feeling of superiority of the older emperor is also conveyed by the aphorism of Augustus noted down by Plutarch (*Apophthegm. Caes. Aug.* 8): ἀκούσας δέ, ὅτι Ἀλέξανδρος δύο καὶ τριάκοντα γεγονώς ἔτη κατεστραμμένος τὰ πλείστα διηπόρει, τί ποιήσει τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον, ἐθαύμαζεν, εἰ μὴ μείζον Ἀλέξανδρος ἔργον ἡγεῖτο τοῦ κτήσασθαι μεγάλην ἡγεμονίαν τὸ διατάξαι τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν.¹³

On the basis of the previous paragraph we may assume that the Alexander-*imitatio* amongst the successors of Augustus will become stronger the more they emphasize the divine nature of their reign, and

shall spread his empire past Garamant and Indian, to a land that lies beyond the stars, beyond the paths of the year and the sun, where heaven-bearing Atlas turns on his shoulders the sphere, inset with gleaming stars. Against his coming even now the Caspian realms and Maeotian lands shudder at Heaven's oracles, and the mouths of the sevenfold Nile are in tumult of terror. Nor, in truth, did Alcides range o'er such a space of earth, though he pierced the brazen-footed deer, or brought peace to the woods of Erymanthus, and made Lerna tremble at his bow: nor he who guides his car with vine-leaf reins, triumphant Liber, driving his tigers down from Nysa's lofty crest.' (tr. Fairclough)

¹² 'When sealing documents, official papers and letters, he initially used a picture of the sphinx, later the image of Alexander the Great and finally his own, engraved by Dioscurides, a seal which later emperors continued to use.'

¹³ 'When he had heard that Alexander at the age of thirty-two, after having subdued most of the world, asked himself in despair what on earth he was going to do for the rest of his life, he was astonished and asked whether Alexander did not consider it a greater task to rule an empire in one's possession than to conquer a great empire.'

weaker the more they present themselves as *civilis princeps*, an emperor who is basically on a level with the rest of the citizens. This assumption appears valid. For instance, we are not aware of any imitation of Alexander in the case of the ultra-Roman Tiberius. It is tempting to speculate about his intended successor, Germanicus. After the description of Germanicus' death in Antioch Tacitus inserts a short digression, in which he points out remarkable similarities between Germanicus and Alexander (*Ann.* 2.73): *Et erant qui formam aetatem genus mortis, ob propinquitatem etiam locorum, in quibus interiit, magni Alexandri fatis adaequarent. nam utrumque corpore decore, genere insigni, haud multum triginta annos egressum, suorum insidiis externas inter gentes occidisse: sed hunc mitem erga amicos, modicum voluptatum, uno matrimonio, certis liberis egisse, neque minus proeliatorem, etiam si temeritas afuerit praepeditusque sit percussas tot victoriis Germanias servitio premere. quod si solus arbiter rerum, si iure et nomine regio fuisset, tanto promptius adsecuturum gloriam militiae, quantum clementia temperantia, ceteris bonis artibus praestitisset.*¹⁴

This is a typical example of *comparatio*, in which Tacitus clearly puts the Roman crown prince above Alexander, because he lacked his vices. Whether Germanicus revealed higher ambitions by his unlawful visits to Egypt and the consultation of the Apis-bull cannot be ascertained.

An emperor, who was, as it were, predestined to become an imitator of Alexander, was Caligula. Indeed, there are some indications that he wanted to be compared with Alexander, for instance Suetonius' remark in *Cal.* 52.3: *Triumphalem quidem ornatum etiam ante expeditionem assidue gestavit, interdum et Magni Alexandri thoracem repetitum e conditorio eius.*¹⁵ However, his short reign and his inadequate achievements as an army commander prevented a far-reaching Alexander-*imitatio*. Something similar can be said of Nero, about whom the story was told, as it was about Alexander and Scipio Africanus, that he had been sired

¹⁴ 'Some there were who, as they thought of his beauty, his age, and the manner of his death, the vicinity too of the country where he died, likened his end to that of Alexander the Great. Both had a graceful person and were of noble birth; neither had much exceeded thirty years of age, and both fell by the treachery of their own people in strange lands. But Germanicus was gracious to his friends, temperate in his pleasures, the husband of one wife, with only legitimate children. He was too no less a warrior, though rashness he had none, and, though after having cowed Germany by his many victories, he was hindered from crushing it into subjection. Had he had the sole control of affairs, had he possessed the power and title of a king, he would have attained military glory as much more easily as he had excelled Alexander in clemency, in self-restraint, and in all other virtues.' (tr. Church & Bodrribb)

¹⁵ 'Already before that expedition he regularly wore the cloak of a triumphator, sometimes also the breastplate of Alexander the Great, which he had taken from his tomb.'

by a serpent. Tacitus' sarcastic comment is delightful: *Ann.* 11.11.3 *Vulgabaturque adfuisse infantiae eius dracones in modum custodum, fabulosa et externis miraculis adsimilata; nam ipse, haudquaquam sui detractor, unam omnino anguem in cubiculo visam narrare solitus est.*¹⁶

I have a feeling that there are few emperors, who do not go in for Alexander-*imitatio* at all, especially if we take into account all the images in the visual arts and on coins. But there is no room for that in this article – and I do not have the competence – I will, therefore, confine myself to a few highlights in the Alexander-*imitatio*, namely the emperors Trajan, Caracalla and finally Julian Apostata.

From a purely factual point of view no emperor is as reminiscent of Alexander as Trajan. Both originated from the periphery of the ancient world, Macedonia and Spain, both started their career at a young age, and both were extremely successful in the war against the Persians c.q. the Parthians. They also resembled each other in their human frailties, drink and young men. Trajan was, probably by birth, a worshipper of Hercules, and called himself 'Neos Dionysus', like Antony. He displayed a great interest in, not to say veneration for the person of Alexander, as is clear from Cassius Dio's report about his visit to Babylon (68.30.1) διὰ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, ᾧ καὶ ἐνήγισεν ἐν τῷ οἰκήματι ἐν ᾧ ἔτετελευτήκει.¹⁷ No emperor penetrated further into the East. Cassius Dio narrates how Trajan stood at the mouth of the Euphrates and dreamt of Alexander and India (68.29.1): Κἀντεῦθεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸν ὠκεανὸν ἐλθὼν, τὴν τε φύσιν αὐτοῦ καταμαθὼν καὶ πλοῖόν τι ἐς Ἰνδίαν πλέον ἰδὼν εἶπεν ὅτι "πάντως ἂν καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς, εἰ νέος ἔτι ἦν, ἐπεραιώθην." Ἰνδοὺς τε γὰρ ἐνενοίει, καὶ τὰ ἐκείνων πράγματα ἐπολυπραγμόνει.¹⁸ The verb ἐπολυπραγμόνει is interesting in this text; for want of anything better I have translated it with 'wanted to know everything about'. Πολυπραγμοσύνη, curiosity gone too far, also about things not meant for man, is mentioned by Arrian as a typical characteristic of Alexander, in combination with his audacity and his desire to cross all human frontiers. I wonder whether Cassius Dio used the word in order to evoke this association,

¹⁶ 'The following story also did the rounds, that serpents, acting as benign genies, had guarded his cradle – old wives' tales, in the spirit of strange legends from foreign climes; for he himself, who was not inclined to paint himself smaller than he was, used to say "that all in all one serpent had been seen in his bedroom."'

¹⁷ 'For he went there on account of Alexander, to whom he offered a sacrifice in the room where he had died.'

¹⁸ 'From here he went to the ocean and learnt its nature. When he saw a ship sailing for India he said: "If I were still young, I certainly would have crossed to India." For he gave the Indians a lot of thought, and wanted to know all about them.'



Caracalla
(Samuel D. Lee Fund)

but perhaps I read him too much with twentieth century glasses. His behaviour in Mesopotamia is in many ways also reminiscent of Alexander. Just like Alexander he rejected a proposal of the Parthian king for a peaceful solution, and after the actual military campaign he gave a lot of attention to water works and harbour construction at the mouth of the Euphrates, the very same projects, which Alexander had tackled during his last period in Babylon. Yet to some extent one can say the same about Trajan as about Augustus: Alexander as 'role-model' does not stand out in any conspicuous way in the remarks and images of the emperor. I suppose that Trajan also was sufficiently sure of his own significance as emperor to forgo imitating Alexander in too pointed a manner.

There is a third, very strong, revival of Alexander-*imitatio* at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, under Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Alexander Severus. We are told about Septimius Severus, that he collected all Egyptian books of oracles and stored them in Alexander's tomb, which he then ordered to be sealed. Evidently, he considered the inspiration which exuded from Alexander still to be a danger. This did not stop his son Caracalla from re-opening the tomb to put his cloak in it as a mark of honour, which is, actually, the smallest token of the admiration which Caracalla showed with regard to Alexander. No emperor went further in his imitation. The *vita* in the *Historia Augusta* mentions this as the first peculiarity of this emperor. Caracalla is described as a nice boy until some sort of psychological change takes place, and he starts to behave in a despotic way (Cc. 2.1): *Egressus vero pueritiam seu patris monitis seu calliditate ingenii sive quod se Alexandro Magno Macedoni aequandum putabat, restrictior, gravior, vultu etiam truculentior factus est, prorsus ut eum, quem puerum scierant, multi esse non crederent. Alexandrum magnum eiusque gesta in ore semper habuit.*¹⁹ Caracalla's reputation will, of course, forever be taint-

ed by the murder of his brother and co-emperor Geta and by his slaughter of the population of Alexandria, who had mocked him. However, this does not mean that we should not treat his Alexander-imitation with the utmost seriousness. Cassius Dio 78.7 informs us about this in much greater detail than the *Historia Augusta*: *περὶ δὲ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον οὕτω τι ἐπτόητο ὥστε καὶ ὄπλοις τισὶ καὶ ποτηρίοις ὡς καὶ ἐκείνου γεγονόσι χρῆσθαι, καὶ προσέτι καὶ εἰκόνας αὐτοῦ πολλὰς καὶ ἐν τοῖς στρατοπέδοις καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Ῥώμῃ στήσαι, φάλαγγά τε τινα ἐκ μόνων τῶν Μακεδόνων ἐς μυρίους καὶ ἑξακισχιλίους συντάξαι, καὶ αὐτὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τε ἐπονομάσαι καὶ τοῖς ὄπλοις οἷς ποτε ἐπ' ἐκείνου ἐκέχρητο ὀπλίσαι· ... καὶ οὐδὲ ταῦτα μέντοι αὐτῷ ἐξήρκεσεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν ἐκείνον ἐφ' ὧν Αὐγουστον ἐπεκαλεῖτο, καὶ ποτε καὶ τῇ βουλῇ ἔγραψεν, ὅτι ἐς τὸ σῶμα αὐθις τὸ τοῦ Αὐγούστου ἐσῆλθεν, ἵνα, ἐπειδὴ ὀλίγον τότε χρόνον ἐβίω, πλείονα αὐθις δι' ἐκείνου ζήσῃ. καὶ διὰ καὶ τοὺς φιλοσόφους τοὺς Ἀριστοτελείους ὠνομασμένους τά τε ἄλλα δεινῶς ἐμίσει, ὥστε καὶ τὰ βιβλία αὐτῶν κατακαῦσαι ἐθελήσῃ, καὶ τὰ συσσίτια ἃ ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ εἶχον, τὰς τε λοιπὰς ὠφελείας ὅσας ἐκαρποῦντο, ἀφείλετο, ἐφκαλέσας σφίσιν ὅτι συναίτιος τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τοῦ θανάτου Ἀριστοτέλης γεγενῆσθαι ἔδοξε. ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἐποίησε, καὶ νῆ Δία καὶ ἐλέφαντας πολλοὺς συμπεριήγετο, ὅπως καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸν Διόνυσον μιμῆσθαι δόξῃ.²⁰*

For me the most intriguing feature in this passage is the title 'Augustus of the East' (ἐφ' ὧς Αὐγουστος), which he gave to Alexander. I take it that he meant by this, that the position of Alexander in the East was comparable to the position which Augustus had held in the West, and at

¹⁹ 'When he had left his childhood behind, he became, either as a result of his father's advice, or because of his own crafty nature, or because he thought he had to equal Alexander the Great of Macedonia, stricter, graver, grimmer also in his facial expression, so that many who had known him as a child could not believe it was he. He was always talking about Alexander the Great and his heroic deeds.'

²⁰ 'He was so obsessed with Alexander, that he used certain weapons and cups which he thought had belonged to him. Moreover, he put up a large number of statues of him in the army camps and in Rome, and he assembled a phalanx consisting only of Macedonians, sixteen thousand men, which he called 'phalanx of Alexander' and which he equipped with weapons which had been used in Alexander's time... Not yet satisfied he called that same Alexander 'the Augustus of the East'. He once wrote to the Senate that he [Alexander] had entered into the body of Augustus in order to have a longer life through him, having lived such a short life before. He also hated the so-called 'Aristotelians' among the philosophers so badly, that he wanted to burn their books. He deprived them of the communal meals which they held in Alexandria, and of all other allowances they had. He had it in for them because he believed that Aristotle was partly responsible for the death of Alexander. This is how he behaved and, by Zeus, he went around with a large number of elephants to create the impression that in this respect also he imitated Alexander, or rather Dionysus.'

the same time, that he, Caracalla himself, strove to be Augustus of the East and West to combine in this way the greatness of both in his person. It is by no means implausible, that Caracalla entertained such megalomaniacal plans on the threshold of his expedition against the Parthians. We could say, that Caracalla tried to combine in his own person both aspects of Alexander, the conqueror and the κοσμοκράτωρ. We find a more detailed description of the outward signs of Caracalla's Alexandromania in Herodianus, 4.8.1-2 (Caracalla = Ἀντωνίνος): ἐπεὶ δὲ τὰ παρὰ τῷ Ἰστρῷ στρατόπεδα διώκησε, κατήλθῃ τε εἰς Θράκην Μακεδόσι γειτινῶσαν, εὐθύς Ἀλέξανδρος ἦν, καὶ τὴν τε μνήμην αὐτοῦ παντοίως ἀνενεώσατο, εἰκόνας τε καὶ ἀνδριάντας ἐν πάσαις πόλεσιν ἀναστήναι ἐκέλευσε, τὴν τε Ῥώμην ἐπλήρωσεν ἀνδριάντων καὶ εἰκόνων, ἐν τῷ Καπετωλίῳ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἱεροῖς, τῆς πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον συναφείας ... προῆι δὲ αὐτὸς ἐν Μακεδονικῷ σχήματι, καυσίαν τε ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν φέρων καὶ κρηπίδας ὑποδύμενος. ἐπιλεξάμενός τε νεανίας Μακεδονικὴν ἐκάλει φάλαγγα, τοὺς τε ἡγουμένους αὐτῆς φέρειν τὰ τῶν ἐκείνου στρατηγῶν ὀνόματα.²¹ The Alexander-imitatio is also striking in the portraits of Caracalla. On a coin from the year 214 one side shows the emperor, and the other the emperor with Alexander crossing the river Granicus. Caracalla's imitation of Alexander did not stop at external appearances, as is shown by two measures taken by this emperor. His best known governmental decision is undoubtedly the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212, by which citizenship was granted to practically all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. This extremely important measure has been interpreted by several historians as an imitation of Alexander's policy of integration regarding the various nations in his empire. Although we have no statements from Caracalla about the motives which led him to devise the *Constitutio*, we can at least say that it exudes a spirit, which is in perfect harmony with the integration policy of his great example. A curious report, which we find both in Cassius Dio and in Herodianus, points in the same direction. I quote the latter (4.10.1-2): ἐπιθυμήσας δὲ μετ' οὐ πολὺ Παρθικὸς κληθῆναι καὶ Ῥωμαίοις ἐπιστεῖλαι ὥς χειρωσάμενος τοὺς κατὰ τὴν ἀνατολὴν βαρβάρους, καίτοι γε οὐσης εἰρήνης βαθείας, μηχανάται τοιόνδε τι.

²¹ 'After having settled the problems with the garrisons on the Danube and having gone to Thrace, which borders on Macedonia, he was suddenly Alexander and he breathed life into his memory in all possible ways. He ordered statues and images to be placed in all cities. Rome, too, he filled with these, in the Capitol and in other temples, to demonstrate his kinship with Alexander. He himself walked around in Macedonian clothes, with a cap on his head and boots on his feet. He selected a number of youths, whom he called 'the Macedonian phalanx'. He ordered their leaders to adopt the names of Alexander's generals.'

ἐπιστέλλει τῷ βασιλεῖ Παρθυαίων (Ἀρτάβανος δ' ἦν ὄνομα αὐτῷ), πέμπει τε πρεσβείαν καὶ δῶρα πάσης ὕλης τε πολυτελοῦς καὶ τέχνης ποικίλης. τὰ δὲ γράμματα ἔλεγεν ὅτι δὴ βούλεται ἀγαγέσθαι αὐτοῦ τὴν θυγατέρα πρὸς γάμον· ἀρμόζειν δὲ αὐτῷ, βασιλεῖ τε καὶ βασιλέως υἱῷ, μὴ ἰδιώτου τινὸς καὶ εὐτελοῦς γαμβρὸν γενέσθαι, ἀγαγέσθαι δὲ βασιλίδα τε καὶ μεγάλου βασιλέως θυγατέρα, δύο δὲ ταύτας ἀρχὰς εἶναι μεγίστας, τὴν τε Ῥωμαίων καὶ τὴν Παρθυαίων· ὥς συναχθεῖσας κατ' ἐπιγαμίαν, μηκέτι ποταμῷ διωρισμένας, μίαν ποιήσιν ἀρχὴν ἀνανταγώνιστον.²² The historicity of this report, accepted by Mommsen and Vogt, is queried by Timpe in a recent article. Caution is therefore called for, but it is absolutely certain that, even if this story were to be only a rumour instigated by Caracalla's enemies, those enemies were thinking entirely in the spirit of Alexander, since he also aimed to join together by means of marriage ties the nations in his empire and he himself was the first to set an example of this for his subjects.

Finally, Julian Apostata. The short reign of this emperor ended in 363, when he was killed at the age of 33 during his expedition against the Persians. The parallelism with Alexander is patently obvious, but does not stop at these outward similarities. In his *Caesares* he reviews his predecessors, among whom Alexander makes a surprise appearance. At the end of this hilarious survey the emperors are granted entry to the Olympus, and are allowed to join the god of their choice, after which the following scene is enacted. Because of his admiration for Marcus Aurelius and Alexander, Julian tries to find a balance between the wise ruler and the impetuous conqueror, *Caesares* 37 (335 d): Μέτα τὸ κήρυγμα τοῦτο ὁ μὲν Ἀλέξανδρος ἔθει πρὸς τὸν Ἡρακλέα, Ὀκταβιανὸς δὲ πρὸς τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα, ἀμφοῖν δὲ ἀπρίξ εἶχετο τοῦ Διὸς καὶ Κρόνου Μάρκος. Πλανώμενος δὲ πολλὰ καὶ περιτρέχοντα τὸν Καίσαρα κατελέησας ὁ μέγας Ἄρης ἢ τε Ἀγροδίτη παρ' ἑαυτοὺς ἐκαλεσάτην· Τραιανὸς δὲ παρὰ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον ἔθει ὡς ἐκεῖνῳ συγκαθεδούμενος.²³ Libianus, an

²² 'Not much later he aspired to the title 'Parthicus' and wanted to report to the Romans, that he had subdued the barbarians in the East. Although there was a deep peace, he made the following plan. He wrote a letter to the king of the Parthians (his name was Artabanus) and sent an embassy to him with presents, made from all sorts of expensive materials and fashioned with skilful craftsmanship. In the letter it said, that he wanted to marry the king's daughter. It was fitting that he, an emperor and son of an emperor, should not become the son-in-law of an ordinary citizen of humble birth, but that he should marry a princess, the daughter of the Great King. At stake were the two greatest kingdoms on earth, that of the Romans and that of the Parthians. If they were united by a marriage alliance and no longer divided by a river, they would form an unconquerable Empire.'

²³ 'After that announcement Alexander walked to Heracles and Octavian to Apollo. Mar-

ardent admirer of Julian, tells us repeatedly that Alexander was an important source of inspiration for Julian (*Or.* 17.17): ἦκεν εἰς τὴν μεγάλην τὴν Ἀντιόχου πόλιν ἢ, εἰ βούλει γε, Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ φίλου τε αὐτῷ καὶ οὐκ ἑῶντος καθεύδειν²⁴ and *ibid.* 18.260: ἐπεθύμησε μὲν Ἀρβηλα καὶ ἰδεῖν καὶ διελθεῖν ἢ ἄνευ μάχης ἢ καὶ μαχεσάμενος ὥστε μετὰ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου νίκης τῆς αὐτόθι καὶ ταύτην ὑμνεῖσθαι, καὶ γνώμην δὲ εἶχεν ἐπιβῆναι πάσης ὅση Πέρσαις ὀρίζει τὸ κράτος.²⁵

It is striking that Christian authors, who are by definition critical of Julian, underline his imitation of Alexander, to such a degree that according to the church historian Socrates, Julian thought that he was a reincarnation of Alexander (*Hist.* 3.21): πεπιστευκῶς δὲ μαντείας τισίν, ἃς αὐτῷ συμπαρὼν ὁ φιλόσοφος Μάξιμος ὑπετίθετο, καὶ ὀνειροπολήσας τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνα δόξαν λαβεῖν ἢ καὶ μᾶλλον ὑπερβαίνειν τὰς ἰκεσίας Περσῶν ἀπεκρούσατο· καὶ ἐνόμιζε κατὰ τὴν Πυθαγόρου καὶ Πλάτωνος δόξαν ἐκ μετενσωματώσεως τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔχειν ψυχὴν, μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸς εἶναι Ἀλεξάνδρος ἐν ἐτέρῳ σώματι. Αὕτη ἡ οἵησις αὐτὸν ἐξηπάτησε καὶ παρεσκεύασε τότε τὴν ἰκεσίαν τοῦ Πέρσου μὴ παραδέξασθαι.²⁶ This comparison with Alexander was extremely harmful to the posthumous reputation of Julian, because it made painfully clear the contrast between Alexander's successes, and the total debacle of Julian's Persian expedition. This also explains why Ammianus Marcellinus, who, without glorifying him uncritically, does not hide his admiration for Julian does not draw a comparison with Alexander. In the speech which he puts into Julian's mouth when he enters Persian territory, he lets the emperor dwell in detail on previous invasions by Roman generals, but Alexander is not mentioned. An additional reason for this reticence is probably, that Ammianus endeav-

cus clung to Zeus and Kronos. Caesar walked from one to the other, until the great Ares and Aphrodite called him into their presence out of pity. Trajan walked to Alexander to take his place next to him.'

²⁴ 'He arrived in the big city of Antiochus, or if you prefer, of Alexander, who was dear to him and did not leave him in peace.'

²⁵ 'A desire came over him to visit Arbela and to march past it, either without fighting a battle or otherwise after a battle, so that apart from the victory, won here by Alexander, this victory would also be sung, and he decided to march through all the territory under the sway of the Persians.'

²⁶ 'Trusting in certain prophecies, given to him by the philosopher Maximus, who was part of his circle, and dreaming that he would obtain the glory of Alexander of Macedonia or even surpass it, he rejected the peace proposals of the Persians. He also believed, in accordance with the teachings of Pythagoras and Plato, that Alexander's soul had entered into his body. This delusion became fatal to him and caused him not to accept the Persian's proposal at that time.'



A contorniate with a portrait of Alexander
(recto; verso: Aeneas with Ascanius and Anchises)
(Museo teatrale al Teatro della Scala, Milan)

ours to make Julian acceptable to a Roman public, and because of this underexposes his marked 'Hellenism'.

As coda the contorniates. Contorniates are coins (with a high-raised rim, hence the name), which in the second half of the fourth century were struck in large numbers, and which members of the Roman aristocracy presented to each other as New Year's gifts. In their detailed study about these coins A. and E. Alföldi have argued convincingly, that these contorniates played a part as propaganda material in the discussion between the Christians and the adherents of the traditional religion, who were still numerous and influential, particularly among the Roman aristocracy. For instance, their interpretation of the fact, that Alexander is often portrayed on these contorniates, is that Alexander was the opposite of Christ in his behaviour and on account of the divine honours he received. In this way Alexander remains emphatically present well into Late Antiquity as a programmatic summary of the desire to conquer and the ambition to rule the world.²⁷

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²⁷ The interested reader be advised to consult the following publications about *imitatio Alexandri*, in general: Bruhl 1930; Heuss 1954; Spencer 2002 (sourcebook); Vermeule 1986 (illustrations); Weippert 1972; Wirth 1975; about Pompey: Greenhalgh 1980, 122-47; Caesar: Green 1989; Augustus: Kienast 1969; Norden 1899; Bellinger 1957; Germanicus: Aalders 1961; Trajan: Weber 1907, 8-14; Caracalla: Timpe 1967; Julian: Szidat 1988; Lane Fox 1997; Barnes 1998, 146-9; contorniates: Alföldi 1990.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE ROMAN EMPERORS

1 *Introduction*

The biographers Suetonius and the author of the *Historia Augusta* stand in the shadow, cast by the two great historians of Rome's imperial age, Tacitus and Ammianus Marcellinus. They write during the same years and about the same periods as their famous contemporaries. Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae* are flanked by Suetonius' *Vitae XII Caesarum*. Both end with Domitian. About the year 390 Ammianus Marcellinus published his *Res gestae, a principatu Caesaris Nervae exorsus*,¹ while in all likelihood the *Historia Augusta* came out soon after, the series of lives of emperors, which begins with Hadrian and continues up to the reign of Diocletian.² It is not surprising that these biographical works have received less recognition, and consequently less attention than the historical ones. The enormous difference in intellectual depth and stylistic level between the historians and the biographers explains this adequately. All the same, it is worthwhile to devote an essay to this less well-known branch of historical literature in an issue of this periodical which focuses on historiography. Besides, the research into Suetonius as well as into the *Historia Augusta* has been very intensive since the fifties, and has created a number of important developments. In the following article I first want to discuss some general characteristics of the biography, then the recent opinions about Suetonius as a writer and researcher, and finally I want to deal with the development or, if preferred, the degeneration of the genre in the *Historia Augusta*, and with the possible relationship between this work and the *Res gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus.

2 *General characteristics of the biography*

One of the problems facing every biographer has been formulated in the following way by Cornelius Nepos in his introduction to the life of Pelop-

¹ 'having started with the principate of the emperor Nerva', 31.16.9.

² It is likely, that the *Historia Augusta* is a continuation of Suetonius, and that the lives of Nerva and Trajan have been lost together with the introduction.

idas: *cuius de virtutibus dubito quem ad modum exponam, quod vereor, si res explicare incipiam, ne non vitam eius enarrare, sed historiam videar scribere; si tantummodo summas attigero, ne rudibus Graecarum litterarum minus dilucide appareat, quantus fuerit ille vir. itaque utrique rei occurram, quantum potuero, et medebor cum satietati tum ignorantiae lectorum.*³

Knowledge of the historical context is indispensable for a proper appreciation of Pelopidas' greatness (*quantus fuerit*). With that in mind, a modern reader would expect a remark about the necessity to see the person in the right perspective, because the time and the circumstances, in which he lived, would have put their mark on him. However, such historical considerations are totally lacking. Nepos was seemingly not troubled, either by the idea that the behaviour of a human being is, at least partially, determined by the time in which he lives, or by the realization, that the past is unfamiliar, and therefore difficult to enter into.⁴ We have no knowledge of comparable statements by Suetonius about the amount of historical knowledge he presumed his reader to possess.⁵ However, he is more prepared than Nepos to assume, that at least a number of his readers had a reasonably detailed knowledge about the late Republic and the early Empire. Anyway, the quoted text shows, that Nepos is aware of the difference between historiography and biography, and that in his eyes they are complementary rather than antithetical.

We find the most principled statement about the distinction between historiography and biography in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* 1.1-2. In his introductory argument Plutarch asks his readers not to look for a complete and detailed account of all the great deeds of Alexander and his counterpart Caesar. He will only give a summary (ἐπιτέμνοντες τὰ πλεῖστα; compare Nepos' words *si summas attigero*). Plutarch continues: οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἥθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μά-

³ 'I am in doubt how to give an account of his merits; for I fear that if I undertake to tell of his deeds, I shall seem to be writing a history rather than a biography; but if I merely touch upon the high points, I am afraid that to those unfamiliar with Grecian literature it will not be perfectly clear how great a man he was. Therefore I shall meet both difficulties as well as I can, having regard for the weariness and the lack of information of my readers', tr. Rolfe.

⁴ Nepos' remark in his *praefatio*, in which he puts things in perspective, refers to the difference between Greeks and Romans, not to opinions which changed in the course of time. For a description of Nepos' biographies see Jenkinson (1973, 703-713).

⁵ Suetonius probably commented on this in his lost introduction to Septicus Clarus, *praefectus praetorio* under Hadrian (Johannes Lydus *De mag.* 2.6).

χαι μυρίονεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγιστα καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ ζωγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν, οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἦθος, ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες, οὕτως ἡμῖν δοτέον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεία μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἐκάστου βίον, ἐάσαντας ἑτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας.⁶

With this self-confident delineation of the domain of the biographer Plutarch shows clearly, that his aim is to reveal the character and the moral lessons, which can be learnt from this by the reader. The biographer has to find the right balance between the account of the external events in the life of the protagonist, from his birth to his death, and the description of his ἦθος. He must make a selection of the factual data at his disposal in such a way, that the selected material creates a picture of the individual characteristics.

Two comments are called for here. This sort of balancing act also occurs in a modern biography, of course. The contribution, which the circumstances and the experiences of the protagonist make to his development, his character building, is an important criterion for the selection of the material. This speaks for itself if the biographer argues from the conviction, that character is, at least for an important part, determined by external influences. In classical biographies much less attention is paid to the development of the personality as a result of such influences.

Whereas in this respect events and experiences play less of a role in classical biographies, deeds and words of the protagonists themselves are in a different category. Dihle has shown how greatly the classical biography has been defined by Aristotle's views about the relationship between someone's πράξεις ('deeds') and his ἦθος ('character').⁷ In this interpretation the human qualities do not just show up in the deeds; they are the result of the deeds: 'Nicht an die Handlungen wird die zugrundeliegende Eigenschaft erkannt (...), sondern durch das Handeln

⁶ 'For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likenesses in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of their great contests', tr. Perrin.

⁷ Dihle 1956, 60-64. He bases himself here on the second book of Arist. *EN*, in particular 1104 A.

im Sinne einer bestimmten ethischen Eigenart wird diese überhaupt erst konstituiert' (p. 61). It is clear from a large number of more or less casual remarks, that Plutarch belongs in this tradition; I quote one of them (*Demosthenes* 11.7): τὸν δ' ἄλλον τρόπον καὶ τὸ ἦθος ἀπὸ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῆς πολιτείας θεωρεῖσθαι δίκαιόν ἐστιν.⁸

This technique of the 'Charakterisierung durch Fakten' is also very notable in the Roman biographies of emperors. As Steidle has shown in great detail in his book *Sueton und die antike Biographie*,⁹ we should not just think of the influence of Greek examples, as Leo postulates in his ground-breaking study about the classical biography, but also of the genuinely Roman tradition of the *laudatio funebris*.

As has already been stated, Plutarch selects the facts he wants to present on the basis of the contribution they can make to the revelation of character and the moral lessons they can teach. The selection of facts in which this results would be seen as trivial and insignificant in a work of history. 'Le petit fait significatif' has remained a distinctive part of the biography.¹⁰ Biographers are not always driven by the high-minded motives of Plutarch. The interest in the daily life of eminent people often deteriorates into a somewhat vulgar inclination towards debunking. We find this inclination already in the first representative of the peripatetic biography, Aristoxenos of Tarentum. In the fragments of his life of Socrates we find anecdotes about Socrates' irascibility and acquisitiveness, which badly tarnish the ideal image of the philosopher.¹¹ The interest in small details of someone's personal life has another dangerous side. Especially when it concerns a character from a more distant past, data about his life are less easy to find than about important political events. Consequently, there is a great temptation to use one's own imagination, for want of reliable material. We can see examples of this in the earliest biographical writings, which caused Momigliano to heave the sigh 'the borderline between fiction and reality is thinner in biography than in ordinary historiography'.¹²

⁸ 'the other traits of his character, and his disposition, should be surveyed in connection with his achievements as a statesman', tr. Perrin. More examples in Leo 1901, 184-87.

⁹ Steidle 1951, 102-26. Earlier remarks to this effect in Stuart (1928, 228 sqq.).

¹⁰ When Dio Cassius includes a revealing detail about Domitian's behaviour he apologizes with the words τοῦτο γὰρ εἰ καὶ ἀνάξιον τοῦ τῆς ἱστορίας ὄγκου ἐστί, ἀλλ' ὅτι γε ἱκανῶς τὸν τρόπον αὐτοῦ ἐπιδείκνυται, ἀναγκαίως ἔγραψα ('Even if this is unworthy of the dignity of history, I had to mention it, because it gives a good insight into his character', 66.9.4).

¹¹ About Aristoxenus as biographer see Momigliano 1971, 74-5. For the role of the peripatetic school in the history of the biography see also Leo 1901, 85-117.

¹² Momigliano 1971, 56. The *Historia Augusta* will confirm this most resoundingly.

3 Suetonius as writer and researcher

The problem concerning the proper relationship between narrative and descriptive parts of the biography affects the choice of material just as much as its disposition. This is one of the central topics in Leo's classic study about the biography. His starting point was the structure of Suetonius' *Lives of the Emperors*, which for modern readers is highly unusual. Suetonius, unlike Plutarch, makes a distinction between descriptive and narrative elements, which determines the structure of his *vitae*. In a somewhat simplified way one could say, that his biographies start with the γένος ('origin') of the emperor and his life up to the moment when he starts his reign. This section is narrative and progresses chronologically. After this follows the description of his conduct in public and in private. The *vita* is rounded off with an account of the end of his life. In this sequence of narrative and descriptive sections the depiction of the behavioural aspects forms the centre of gravity. The separate parts are most clearly visible in the *vita Augusti*: c. 1-4 γένος, 5-8 period up to the sole rule, 9-60 conduct during public appearances, 61-93 private life, 94-100 *omina* and death. Suetonius marks the transitions as follows: c. 9 *proposita vitae eius velut summa, partes singillatim neque per tempora sed per species exsequar, quo distinctius demonstrari cognoscique possint*; c. 61 *quoniam qualis in imperiis ac magistratibus regendaeque per terrarum orbem pace belloque re publica fuerit, exposui, referam nunc interiorum ac familiarem eius vitam quibusque moribus atque fortuna domi et inter suos egerit a iuventa usque ad supremum vitae diem*.¹³

Suetonius distinguishes very emphatically between chronological sections (*per tempora*) and eidological ones (*per species*, εἶδη). The way, in which the emperors behave, is dealt with in separate sections, each of which starts with a keyword. In this respect Suetonius' biographies of the emperors match his biographies of poets, grammarians and orators. With this similarity as the starting point Leo traced back the literary history of this biographical type. He came to the conclusion that the mould, in which Suetonius had cast his lives of the emperors, originated from the Alexandrian philological school, where it was used to describe the lives of literary figures. Characteristic features of this type of

¹³ 'Having given as it were a summary of his life, I shall now take up its various aspects one by one, not in chronological order, but by classes, to make the account clearer and more intelligible'; (tr. Rolfe, adapted). Not in all the *vitae* is the scheme so carefully worked out. In the case of some emperors their short reign imposes restrictions (Galba, Otho, Vitellius); the *vita Titi* is slightly different, because it has panegyric features.

biography are a sectional listing of facts with regard to the various aspects of life and work, a neglect of the chronology, and a scientific style without artistic pretensions. Opposite this Alexandrian type Leo put the peripatetic biography, in which the ἥθος is central; the reader is informed about this by way of the chronological treatment of the πράξεις. This type was developed for the biographies of army commanders and statesmen, in which great care was given to the literary design. Its representative is Plutarch.

The main objection one can level at Leo's study is, that he makes the 'genre laws' far too absolute, and does not leave any room for influences other than those of the predecessors in a specific genre. Moreover, the Greek biographies written before Plutarch have been transmitted in a very fragmented condition, which does not really allow for Leo's sharp genre definitions. Indeed, after the publication of Leo's book, papyri have been found, which are at odds with this way of demarcating the two genres.¹⁴ Although the connection, which Leo made between Suetonius' lives of the emperors and the scientific biographies of men of letters, which the Alexandrian philologists used to put in their commentaries, has therefore been qualified, its essence has not been affected.

For decades Leo's study exerted an unfavourable influence over the esteem, in which Suetonius as a writer was held. One was left with the impression of an author, who tried to force an unsuitable structure on biographies of people, who would have been better served, if the focus had been on the historical events, which, to a large extent, they themselves had set in motion. Instead, their public and private attitude and conduct was described in neat and detailed sections. By dividing the text into these separate sections a disparate impression was created. For this reason Suetonius is depicted in most histories of literature as an industrious fact collector, who buries the reader under his card index, without much thought or explanation. Funaioli's final verdict 'ma un vero scrittore non è' pithily summarises this view.¹⁵

Steidle brought about a reversal of this judgement in his earlier quoted study. Not only did he point to specifically Roman elements in the *Lives of the Emperors*, as has briefly been mentioned before, but he also tried to show, by means of a thorough analysis of the *vita divi Iuli*, that

¹⁴ Pap. Ox. nr. 1176 contains part of Satyros' biography of Euripides, which, if only because of its dialogue form, reveals its literary pretensions. Pap. gr. Hauniensis 6 contains a genealogy of the Ptolemies in a succinct, business-like style. See for this papyrus Steidle (1963, 177).

¹⁵ Funaioli (1927, 26). Sadly, no doubt the most quoted opinion about Suetonius.

Suetonius did aim to create a consistent picture of his characters. The lack of personal comments on Caesar's doings and dealings does not mean that Suetonius did not have an opinion about his characteristic qualities. His reticence in this respect arises from his intention to let the facts do the talking, and to leave it up to the reader to draw his own conclusions. Caesar is presented to the reader as a man, who from childhood onwards aims for a position of power in Rome, very energetically, unscrupulously, and constantly at loggerheads with the *optimates*. The comparison with Plutarch's biography of Caesar shows clearly that Suetonius places his own accents, and that he does so consistently.¹⁶ Steidle's study was followed by a number of articles and books, in which other *vitae* were analyzed in the same spirit and with a comparable outcome.¹⁷ The disdainful judgement about Suetonius as 'fleissiger Anekdotensammler' can be deemed outdated since these studies.¹⁸

Suetonius' style of writing has received much less attention than the factual content of the lives.¹⁹ The hallmarks of his prose in the biographies are simplicity and transparency; thus his prose is an example of the *genus tenue*. Suetonius writes a typically scholarly prose, with its inherent merits and occasional dullness. Both Seneca's modernism and the archaizing tendencies of his own era are alien to him. D'Anna has good reason to call Suetonius 'un seguace di Quintiliano'. It has been thought that the demands, which he made on his own style, are recognizable in the way in which he characterizes Augustus' style, with its emphasis on plainness and clarity, and the care taken to use language properly (*Aug.* 86.1-2): *genus eloquendi secutus est elegans et temperatum vitatis sententiarum ineptiis atque concinnitate et 'reconditorum verborum', ut ipse dicit, 'fetoribus'; praecipuamque curam duxit sensum animi quam apertissime exprimere. (...) cacozeos et antiquarios, ut diverso genere vitiosos, pari fastidio spreuit.*²⁰

¹⁶ Interesting in this context is the way in which the source references and the documents are distributed over the *vitae*. See for this Müller 1952, 95-108.

¹⁷ Hanslik 1954, Luck 1964 and Gugel 1977 have a mostly positive opinion. The upgrading of Suetonius reaches a temporary high point in Cizek 1977. More reservations in Bringmann 1971 and Döpp 1972.

¹⁸ In these attempts at reevaluating Suetonius the scales have sometimes been tipped too far. In my opinion Cizek attributes too much subtlety to Suetonius. Dihle 1954 already warned against this sort of exaggeration; also Flach 1972 remains very critical.

¹⁹ Some stylistic research can be found in d'Anna 1967 who confines himself to a few chapters from the *Nero*. Baldwin's concluding chapter (1983) with the title 'Techniques, style and language' cannot really be called a stylistic analysis.

²⁰ 'He cultivated a style of speaking that was chaste and elegant, avoiding the vanity of attempts at epigram and an artificial order, and as he himself expresses it, "the mouldy smell

Whilst it is indisputable, that Suetonius' stocks as a writer have gone up, the appreciation of his research seems to have gone down. One of the appealing aspects of the *Vitae Caesarum* is the presence of interesting source material, letters of emperors, wills and edicts.²¹ It was known from the *HA H.* 11.3, that Suetonius had been imperial secretary, *ab epistulis*, under Hadrian. It stood to reason to conclude, that Suetonius had used this office to dig out these important documents by researching the imperial archives. Thus A. Macé was able to paint a picture of Suetonius as an independent and persistent archive researcher in his influential *Essai sur Suétone*, 110-169. The biographer himself draws attention to the authentic nature of the documents, and to the fact that he had personally handled them (*Aug.* 87.1): *cotidiano sermone quaedam frequentius et notabiliter usurpasse eum litterae ipsius autographae ostentant, in quibus identidem, cum aliquos numquam soluturos significare vult, 'ad Kalendas Graecas soluturos' ait; notavi et in chirographo eius illa praecipue: non dividit verba nec ab extrema parte versuum abundantis litteras in alterum transfert, sed ibidem statim subicit circumducitque.*²² In this context his remark about Nero's poems is also interesting: *Nero 52.3 venere in manus meas pugillares libellique cum quibusdam notissimis versibus ipsius chirographo scriptis, ut facile appareret non tralatos aut dictante aliquo exceptos, sed plane quasi a cogitante atque generante exaratos; ita multa et deleta et inducta et superscripta inerant.*²³

In 1951 an honorary decree for Suetonius was found in Hippo Regius, which made it clear that Suetonius, before becoming *ab epistulis*, had held the positions of *a studiis* and *a bibliothecis*; this decree strengthened the conviction, that he had been in an ideal position to study pri-

of far-fetched words", making it his chief aim to express his thoughts as clearly as possible. ... He looked upon innovators and archaizers with equal contempt, as faulty in opposite directions', tr. Rolfe adapted

²¹ Letters of Augustus to Livia contain fascinating sections about the attitude to be taken towards young Claudius in *Claud.* 4.

²² 'That in his everyday conversation he used certain favourite and peculiar expressions appears from the letters in his own hand, in which he says every now and then, when he wishes to indicate that certain men will never pay, that "they will pay on the Greek Kalends"; I also observed this special peculiarity in his manner of writing: he does not divide the words or carry superfluous letters from the end of one line to the beginning of the next, but writes them just below the rest of the word and draws a loop around them'.

²³ 'There have come into my hands note-books and papers with some well-known verses of his, written with his own hand and in such wise that it was perfectly evident that they were not copied or taken down from dictation, but worked out exactly as one writes when thinking and creating; so many instances were there of words erased or struck through and written above the lines', tr. Rolfe.

mary sources, and that we reap the benefits in his biographies.²⁴ However, L. De Coninck's recent study (1983) will probably have a negative impact on this image of Suetonius. De Coninck discusses the various collections of documents, which existed in the early empire, from the *sacraria*, the private imperial archive and the *commentarii principis*, in which the imperial verdicts in the judicial sphere as well as those regarding internal and external affairs were kept, up to and including the *acta senatus* and the *acta urbis*. He goes on to examine which data in the *vitae* might have their origin in these collections. In doing so he is much more critical than Macé and Townend, and succeeds in proving that Suetonius with regard to many data did not use archive material. Even showpieces like the letters of Augustus are queried by De Coninck, because, according to comments made by Pliny the Elder, Quintilian and Gellius, not only collections of letters, but also *autographa* of Augustus were in circulation.²⁵ This dealt a heavy blow to Suetonius' reputation as a methodical researcher. Yet, there are several passages in the *vitae*, which prove that Suetonius enjoyed detailed research, and that he achieved results with it. I mention as examples the fact that he concluded that Augustus' original *cognomen* was Thurinus (*Aug.* 7.1-3), and his technical and accurate explanation regarding the birthplace of Caligula (*Cal.* 8). In spite of the fact that the way, in which he structures his work, has indisputable shortcomings, his approach is undeniably scientific, and he always strives to be impartial. In this respect he often compares favourably with Tacitus, his superior in all else. In conclusion a statement of Petrarca: *testem nempe certissimum habemus et qui de summis viris agens nec metu flectitur nec gratia, Suetonius Tranquillus*.²⁶

4 *The Historia Augusta and Ammianus Marcellinus*

The *HA*, which should probably be dated at the end of the fourth century, contains the biographies of the emperors Hadrian up to and including Diocletian's predecessor Carinus. Thus it covers more than one and a half centuries (117-285) and is the only literary source for large

²⁴ Townend (1961) and Pflaum (1960, 219-24) discuss Suetonius' career in the light of this new discovery.

²⁵ Independently of De Coninck, Baldwin (1983) had arrived at a similar scepticism. He concludes his discussion about Augustus with the words *caveat lector* (p. 139).

²⁶ 'We do have a completely reliable witness, who, when speaking about the most powerful men, was not swayed by fear or partiality'. *Fam. rer.* 24.5.12; quoted by Flach 1972, 288.

parts of this period.²⁷ The quality of its style, as well as its historical information, has elicited bitter complaints from scholars of previous generations. Leo comments at the beginning of his discussion of the *HA*, that he '(sich) hier einmal gerne der Philologenpflicht entzöge Kehrriethaufen umzuwühlen'. Mommsen describes parts of the work as 'nicht etwa eine getrübbte Quelle, sondern eine Kloake'. Not quite a century later Syme (1968, 4) calls the same work 'a garden of delights, with abundant refreshment'. From rubbish heap to garden of delights: some explanation seems called for.

Roughly speaking, the *HA* falls into three parts. The emperors Hadrian up to and including Caracalla are portrayed in reasonably thorough biographies. These 'primary *vitae*' are plain in style and rich in information. The structure, used by Suetonius, is clearly recognisable in some of the lives (particularly those of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius). Here the author uses reliable biographical material. For the second series, from *Opilius Macrinus* up to and including the *Gordiani*, the author follows the Greek historians Herodianus and Dexippus. The author's own imagination is the main source for the final part, from the *Tyranni triginta* up to and including *Carinus*. Closely akin to these last *vitae* are the so-called 'secondary' lives of princes and pretenders, which are found between the primary *vitae* of the first part. In this last group the author emerges as a 'rogue scholar', as Syme aptly characterizes him. It teems with fantastical stories, fictional documents, speeches and edicts. Just one example, to show what we can expect: in the life of Pescennius Niger, a secondary *vita*: an oracle, when asked about the duration of Septimius Severus' reign, replies in Greek as follows, *PN* 9.2:

*'bis denis Italum conscendit navibus aequor
si tamen una ratis transiliet pelagus'
ex quo intellectum Severum viginti annos expleturum.*

Dessau (1918, col. 391) recognized Verg. *A.* 1.381 *bis denis Phrygium conscendi navibus aequor*, but there is more. The second line comes without a doubt from Horace (*Carm.* 1.3.23-4) *si tamen impiae / non tangenda rates transilient vada*. Truly, it requires the nerve of a 'rogue scholar' to

²⁷ In the manuscripts of the *HA* the lives are under the names of six authors, Aelius Spartianus, Iulius Capitolinus, Avidius Cassius, Vulcacius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus. In his renowned article from 1889 Dessau defended the proposition that the collection dates from the last quarter of the fourth century, and is the work of one author. (Part II of this volume contains several studies about the *HA* and its authorship, the latter item being extensively treated in chapter 14 'The Discussion of Authorship'; note by the eds.).

try and sell to the reader a combination of two lines from Vergil and Horace claiming that this is an oracle translated from the Greek.²⁸

Particularly with regard to the last group of lives the question has to be asked, whether we are still dealing with real biographies of emperors, or whether we should call these particular lives 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' with a historical flavour. It is not only the content of the *HA*, which gives rise to this question. This breaching of the traditional genres has sometimes been called a main characteristic of the literary output dating from his period. The phenomenon has been detected in the poetry of Claudianus, in which the distinction between epos and panegyric has mostly disappeared. It is very striking in Prudentius' work, which combines bucolic elements with a hymn, and links satire with didactic poetry.²⁹ In order to get closer to our subject I also point out the lack of balance in the *Liber de Caesaribus* written by Aurelius Victor, of which the first 38 chapters are biographical, while the last four capita describe the period from Diocletian up to the year 360 in chronological order, with the emphasis on the events, not on the person of the emperor. For this reason Dufraigne calls the *Caesares* a 'nouvel exemple de l'osmose des genres', in his introduction to the Budé-edition.³⁰

It has been thought that the work of Ammianus also contains biographical elements, first of all in the *elogia*, the final verdict about a character, in which the *bona*, the *vitia* and the *forma* are discussed. However, in this respect Ammianus falls totally within the historical tradition, as is clear from Seneca Maior's remark (*Suas.* 6.21) *quotiens magni alicuius viri mors ab historicis narrata est, totiens fere consummatio totius vitae et quasi funebris laudatio redditur. hoc, semel aut iterum a Thucydide factum, item in paucissimis personis usurpatum a Sallustio, T. Livius benignus omnibus magnis viris praestitit. sequentes historici multo id effusius fecerunt.*³¹ Ch. Samberger has devoted a profound study to this problem,³² in which she shows, among other things, that the annalistic structure of the material is subordinated to the coherence of the

²⁸ Cf. Den Hengst 1981, 52 and page 126, 130 and 167 of this volume (note eds.).

²⁹ See for this Fontaine 1977.

³⁰ Dufraigne 1975, L.

³¹ 'Whenever historians relate the death of a great man, they almost invariably give a summary of his whole life and pronounce a kind of funeral eulogy. This was done once or twice by Thucydides, and Sallust observed the practice in the case of a very few personages. The generous Livy bestowed it on all great men. Later historians have been much more lavish', tr. Winterbottom.

³² Samberger 1969. Important comments in Sabbah (1978) ch. 13 about 'les techniques de l'argumentation'. I leave aside the studies of Pauw (1977 and 1979), because, in my opinion,

content. Ammianus connects scattered reports about central characters in his work by means of pro- and retrospective remarks. A good example of this sort of macro-structural intervention is, for instance, the evaluation of Julian in 16.5 and in 25.4, two passages which put his history within a frame. Moreover, Samberger shows, that in Ammianus the actions of the emperors dominate the way, in which the events are reported, even more strongly than in Tacitus. Both facts cause her to claim, that in Ammianus is moving in the direction of the 'Kaiserbiographie'. However, the dominant role of the emperor is the result of the changed political reality. Samberger's observation, that the scattered reports about the lives of the emperors, if read in sequence, would produce a continuous life-story, makes us aware of the fact, that Ammianus works in quite a different way. In my opinion it is impossible to maintain that Ammianus has blurred the boundary between historiography and biography.

Particularly in those *vitae* of the *HA*, in which the author lets himself go, there are programmatic remarks, which show that he is aware of the literary tradition, of which he is a part. Suetonius is praised as *emen-datissimus et candidissimus scriptor* (*Quadrige tyrannorum* 1.1), and is included as one of the biographical predecessors in *Probus* 2.7.

In the introduction to the life of Opilius Macrinus (1.5) the author states that in describing the character the revealing detail is significant: *omnino rerum viliū aut nulla scribenda sint aut nimis pauca, si tamen ex his mores possint animadverti*.³³ These programmatic remarks are given a twist, which is totally lacking in Suetonius. The biographers are put opposite the historians, and are described as stylistically inferior, but more reliable (*Pr.* 2.7): *mihi quidem id animi fuit ut non Sallustios, Livios, Tacitos, Trogos atque omnes disertissimos imitarer viros in vita principum et temporibus disserendis, sed Mariū Maximum, Suetonium Tranquillum, Fabium Marcellinum, Gargilium Martialem, Iulium Capitolinum, Aelium Lampridium ceterosque, qui haec et talia non tam diserte quam vere memoriae tradiderunt*.³⁴ We find a similar opposition between *veritas* and *eloquentia* in several places. In the second chapter of

they contradict each other regarding the indirect characterization (cf. 1977, 197 and 1979, 126).

³³ 'Either nothing at all should be said of petty matters or certainly very little, and then only when light can thereby be thrown on character', tr. Magie.

³⁴ 'As for me, indeed, it has been my purpose, in relating the lives and times of the emperors, to imitate, not a Sallust, or a Livy, or a Tacitus, or a Trogus, or any other of the most eloquent writers, but rather Marius Maximus, Suetonius Tranquillus, Fabius Marcellinus, Gargilius Martialis, Julius Capitolinus, Aelius Lampridius and the others who have handed down

the *vita Aureliani* the mickey is taken out of the four canonical historians, when the author describes a conversation with the city prefect Iunius Tiberianus about the work of ‘Trebellius Pollio’, the immediate predecessor of ‘Vopiscus’, as the author calls himself here. The city prefect criticises ‘Trebellius Pollio’ because *multa incuriose, multa breviter prodidisset*.³⁵ The author ‘refutes’ the accusation by saying that all historians (he mentions again Sallust, Livy, Tacitus and Trogus) have lied at some point, after which Tiberianus surrenders, A 2.2: ‘scribe’, inquit, ‘ut licet. securus, quod velis, dices, habiturus mendaciorum comites quos historicae eloquentiae miramur auctores’.³⁶

Syme has interpreted these polemical and disparaging remarks about the *historica eloquentia* as a veiled attack on the *Res gestae* of Ammianus. This standpoint became the main issue in a lively, sometimes irritable debate with Momigliano.³⁷ In order to make a credible case for this accusation one first has to prove that the author of the *HA* knew Ammianus’ work and used it. With regard to the *HA* this is a dicey undertaking, because the author never quotes *verbatim*, but always uses paraphrases and deliberate variations. One is, therefore, constantly faced with the question, whether the supposed allusion is really in the text, or only in the eye of the beholder. On top of that, the author of the *HA* uses the technique of the transposition, i.e. he puts passages from other authors in a context, which is different from the original one, as Kolb (1972, 138–58) has shown. Finally, there is a fair chance, that similar passages have a commonplace nature.³⁸ Syme admits that none of the

to memory these and other such details not so much with eloquence as with truthfulness’, tr. Magie. The biographers mentioned form a strange group. Marius Maximus wrote the lives of the emperors from Nerva up to and including Heliogabalus. What little we know about him comes from references in the *HA*, where he is described (*Quadruga tyrannorum* 1.2) as *homo verbosissimus qui (...) mythistoricis se voluminibus implicavit* (‘the wordiest man of all, who involved himself in pseudo-historical works’; it might be a self-portrait). About Fabius Marcellinus we know nothing. Gargilius Martialis is only known to us as the third century author of a work *medicinae ex oleribus et pomis*. The last two mentioned belong to the ‘scriptores Historiae Augustae’.

³⁵ In my opinion an allusion to the criticism of Asinius Pollio about Caesar’s *Commentarii*, quoted in Suet. *Div. Iul.* 56: *Pollio Asinius parum diligenter, parumque integra veritate compositos putat* (‘Asinius Pollio thinks that they were put together somewhat carelessly and without strict regard for the truth’).

³⁶ “Well then, write as you will. You will be safe in saying whatever you wish, since you will have as comrades in falsehood those authors whom we admire for the style of their histories”, tr. Magie. A free imitation, I think, of Cic. *Brutus* 42 *at ille (Atticus) ridens ‘tuo vero’, inquit, ‘arbitratu, quoniam quidem concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis, ut aliquid dicere possint argutius’* (‘At this he smiled and said: “As you like, since the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative”’, tr. Hendrickson).

ten parallels, collected by him, is conclusive *in itself*. However, he does think, that the 'cumulative evidence' they provide together, is irrefutable. Momigliano reacts to this with the forceful statement that 'dieci indici cattivi non fanno un argomento buono'. Taking into consideration the kind of imitation used in the *HA*, a parallel which convinces everybody will probably never be found. When we reason on the basis of 'cumulative evidence', we end up arguing along the lines of probability, and at some point the scales will have to tip towards an admission of literary contact. For that reason I add to Syme's dossier a parallel, which in my opinion is at least as compelling as the derivations detected by him.

Straub (1952, 19-39) has pointed out the similarity between the description of the battle fought by Claudius Gothicus against the Goths in the *vita Claudii* 8.5, and the description in the *Res gestae* 31.7, of the war between the Goths and the emperor Valens, regarding which he specifically referred to the use of the unfamiliar term *carrago* 'wagon camp' in both passages. It is my impression that *Res gestae* 31.7 also served as a model for the long digression in the *vita Aureliani* 10-15, about the *adrogatio* of Aurelian by a certain *Ulpus Crinitus*. Fisher (1929, 149) says about the historical content of this passage: 'This long section does not contain a single detail of any historical worth. In all probability no such man as Ulpus Crinitus ever existed; and, if he did, he did not adopt Aurelianus, since Aurelian's name shows no trace of the alleged adoption.' Crinitus is the *cognomen* of the emperor Trajan in Eutropius *Brev.* 8.1.2. The link with Trajan is underlined by the characterization of Ulpus Crinitus in *A* 10.2: *qui se de Traiani genere referebat, et fortissimi re vera viri et Traiani simillimi*.³⁷ In *A* 14.6 Ulpus Crinitus says *hoc igitur quod Cocceius Nerva in Traiano adoptando, quod Ulpus Traianus in Hadriano (...) censui esse referendum*.³⁸ The link between the fictional Ulpus Crinitus and the emperor Trajan can hardly be shown more explicitly.

It so happens that in c. 31.7 of the *Res gestae*, which Straub links with

³⁷ Syme (1968, 69-71; 94-103), preceded by Straub (1952, 19-39). Momigliano's resistance (1975) is, of course, related to his scepticism with regard to the late dating of the *Historia Augusta*. Rosen (1982, 172-83) gives a good summary of the discussion.

³⁸ The very sceptical Cameron (1964, 363) nevertheless points out the similarity between *Claudius* 6.6 *epotata flumina*, and Claudianus *Cons. Stil.* I 171 *arebant tantis epoti milibus amnes*, of which Keudel (1970, 47) proves the traditional character.

³⁹ 'who used to assert that he was of the house of Trajan – he was, in actual fact, a most brave man and very similar to Trajan.'

⁴⁰ This custom, then, which was followed by Nerva in adopting Trajan, by Trajan in adopting Hadrian ... I have thought I should now bring back', tr. Magie.

the *vita Claudii*, one of the two commanding generals is the *comes* Traianus. The sequence of events in Ammianus' historical report is reminiscent of what is stated at the fictional adoption of Aurelian, and of the instructions he receives from the emperor Valerianus, in three respects. In Ammianus, Traianus is sent to Constantinople to join battle with the Goths. In the *vita Aureliani* Aurelian is adopted in Byzantium by Crinitus, and subsequently invited to fight the battle against the Goths as his *vicarius*, which is necessary, because Crinitus himself is ill. In Ammianus 31.7.5 a general, Frigeridus, also withdraws for that reason. Finally, Valerianus orders Aurelian (A 11.6) *quaerere ubi carrago sit hostium et vere scire quanti qualesque sint*.⁴¹ In Ammianus (31.7.6) we read how the commanders *Gothos quidquid molirentur sagaciter observabant*⁴² and in the next paragraph Ammianus tells us about the troops of the Goths *ad carraginem (quam ipsi ita appellant) aliti velocitate regressae*.⁴³ This convergence of similarities between a historical report in Ammianus and a fictional passage in the *HA* makes me think that it is not too far fetched to assume a wilful adaptation.

Syme's proposition gains enormously in persuasiveness, once sufficient reasons have been given which make it possible to accept that the author of the *HA* knew and used Ammianus' work. I add one more argument. The *HA* contains numerous passages, in which the hunt for trivia, *vilia* or *frivola*, of which some authors were guilty, is discussed with some scorn. Nevertheless, the author includes these in his own work with fearless inconsistency, and deliberately, as is clear from A 10.1: *frivola haec fortassis cuipiam et nimis levia esse videantur, sed curiositas nihil recusat*.⁴⁴ In many prefaces the historian promises that he will restrict himself to what is *dignum memoratu* ('worthy of mention') is given in many prefaces. No one does this as emphatically as Ammianus, who says about trivial details *praeceptis historiae dissonantia discurrere per negotiorum celsitudines assuetae*.⁴⁵ Already Ennslin (1923, 15) made the observation, that Ammianus 'sich daher wohl auch besonders gegen die in der Biographie sich breitmachende *curiositas* wendet.'

⁴¹ 'to ascertain where the enemy's train is, and to find out exactly how great his forces are and of what kind'.

⁴² 'were keenly watching for any movement that the Goths might attempt'.

⁴³ 'they returned with winged speed to their wagon-city (as they themselves call it)', tr. Magie.

⁴⁴ 'These details may perhaps seem to someone to be paltry and over trivial, but research stops at nothing'.

⁴⁵ 'not in accordance with the principles of history; for it is wont to detail the high lights of events', tr. Magie, 26.1.1; cf. 14.9.9; 27.2. 11; 28.1.15.

With regard to the *HA*, certainties are frustratingly thin on the ground. On the basis of the passages, discussed above, serious consideration should be given to the proposition, that in the late fourth century the awareness of the genre differences between biography and historiography was very much active, and even led to an exchange of polemical remarks.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

LATIN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PLUTARCH

The Case of Ammianus Marcellinus

Plutarch's influence on the historical thought of subsequent ages is a vast and fascinating subject. One major historical work from Late Antiquity has, to the best of my knowledge, not yet received any systematic attention in connection with Plutarch. I refer to the Latin *Res gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus, dating from the last decade of the fourth century. Ammianus deals with recent history, in which the central figure is the highly controversial emperor Julian the Apostate. It is important to keep in mind that Ammianus knew Julian personally and that he accompanied him on his Persian campaign, in the course of which the emperor died on the battlefield. Despite his severe criticism of some key aspects of Julian's policies, Ammianus shows a profound admiration for Julian, who is, quite literally, his hero.

The emperor, his historian and the 'evening sun of paganism', as my compatriot Hartman (1910) used to call Plutarch, have much in common. By birth and education they were Greek and proud of it. By choice and vocation they were deeply involved in Roman history, Plutarch and Ammianus writing it, the emperor making it himself. More importantly, all three of them considered themselves Platonists. This is well known from the writings of Plutarch and Julian, but Ammianus, too, on the basis of his numerous digressions, has been aptly characterised by Szidat as a representative of what he calls *Vulgarneuplatonismus*. All in all, there is ample reason to look for possible traces of Plutarch's works in Ammianus.

I begin with a technical passage. In his digression on siege engines in RG 23.4, Ammianus mentions the mobile siege tower or *helepolis*: 'a machine well known to the historians, which we Greeks call *helepolis*'. Two Greek historians known to us describe Demetrius' tower, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, in his *Life of Demetrius* chs. 20-1. The technical description in Ammianus shows a strong resemblance to that in Plutarch, and Ammianus makes in passing two additional remarks that, in my opinion, betray his indebtedness to Plutarch. Ammianus writes in RG 23.4.10: *cuius opera diuturna Demetrius, Antigoni filius regis, Rhodo*

*aliisque urbibus oppugnatis Poliorcetes est appellatus.*¹ The unnecessary and, for Ammianus, unusual mention of Demetrius' father can be explained by the fact that Plutarch had devoted the chapters preceding his description to Antigonos. Secondly, the words *opera diuturna* in my opinion represent *Demet. 20.9* Ῥόδιοι δὲ πολὺν χρόνον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πολιορκηθέντες.²

In two other of the numerous digressions that Ammianus inserts into his *Res gestae*, he makes use of themes that he probably had found in Plutarch. In *RG* 14.6.1, the famous digression on Roman life and manners, Ammianus mentions the harmony of *Virtus* and *Fortuna* as the basis of Rome's greatness: *Roma ut augetur sublimibus incrementis, foedere pacis aeternae Virtus convenit atque Fortuna plerumque dissidentes.*³ This is a theme from the commonplace discussion, found in Plutarch's essay *De Fortuna Romanorum*, on the relative merit of the Greeks and the Romans, where it is asked whether Rome owed its success to fortune or to its own excellence and bravery. It is of course hazardous to postulate an intertextual relation where such a well-worn topos is concerned, but in this case there are again textual resemblances that make it plausible that Ammianus had Plutarch's text in mind when he wrote this passage. Note the casual *plerumque dissidentes*, 'ordinarily at variance', which is completely irrelevant in Ammianus' line of thought, but very prominent in Plutarch's *De Fortuna Romanorum*, which opens with the words: Αἱ πολλοὺς πολλάκις ἡγωνισμέναι καὶ μεγάλους ἀγῶνας Ἀρετὴ καὶ Τύχη,⁴ after which Plutarch goes on to say in 316 E that the two forces made their peace and worked harmoniously together to establish Rome's greatness. This is echoed in Ammianus' words *foedere pacis aeternae Virtus convenit atque Fortuna.*⁵ In his digression Ammianus shows great respect for Rome as lawgiver and bringer of peace. Elsewhere (16.10.13), he even calls the city *imperii virtutumque omnium lar*,⁶ which is in complete accordance with Plutarch's positive assessment of Rome's role in the world. So in this very personal (and anachronistic!) evaluation of the capital city and its

¹ 'by using this machine for a long time Demetrius, the son of King Antigonos, captured Rhodes and other cities and gained the name of Poliorcetes.'

² 'the Rhodians having been besieged by him for a long time.'

³ 'Valour and Good Fortune, which are often at variance, conspired in an unbreakable bond, to assist the steps by which Rome rose to glory.'

⁴ 'Virtue and Fortune who have often fought many large battles.'

⁵ 'Virtue and Fortune formed a pact of eternal peace.'

⁶ 'the home of empire and of all the virtues.'

place in history, Ammianus turns to Plutarch to find an explanation for its rise to power and its greatness.

The third theme to which I would like to draw attention is the digression on the role of the *genius* in RG 21.14.3-5. In the preceding sections Ammianus has told his readers that on the eve of his death the emperor Constantius admitted to his closest confidants that he felt abandoned because he could no longer see a mysterious something (*secretum aliquid*) which he thought dimly appeared to him from time to time. This he believed to be a guardian spirit appointed to protect him, and its departure to be a sign that he was about to leave this world. Then follows the digression proper. First, Ammianus tells us that *admodum tamen paucissimis visa, quos multiplices auxere virtutes*.⁷ He goes on to quote Menander, in Greek, who said that every man receives at birth a guardian spirit who guides him on the path of life, a quotation found also in Plutarch *De tranquillitate animi* 474 B: ἅπαντι δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπάριστται εὐθὺς γενομένῳ, μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου. In section 5, Ammianus enumerates great figures from history whom their guardian spirits had attended: *quorum adminiculis freti praecipuis Pythagoras enituisse dicitur et Socrates Numaque Pompilius et superior Scipio et, ut quidam existimant, Marius et Octavianus, cui Augusti vocabulum delatum est primo, Hermesque Termaximus et Tyaneus Apollonius atque Plotinus*.⁸ This catalogue of 'Wundermänner', θεῖοι ἄνδρες, is carefully chosen by Ammianus from Greek and Roman history in the manner of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. In fact, he says, these δαίμονες appear already in Homer, who presents them as gods, whereas in reality they were guardian spirits, who aided their protégés in battle and elsewhere. On the Greek side Ammianus mentions Pythagoras, Socrates, Hermes Trismegistos (or *Termaximus* in the Latin form), Apollonius of Tyana and Plotinus. From Roman history we find the priest-king Numa Pompilius, Scipio Maior, and, with some reservation (*ut quidam existimant*) Marius and Octavianus, later called Augustus. The Roman list is clearly inferior to the Greek, but it is evident that Ammianus has made an effort to be even-handed. Rounding off the digression, he insists once again on the prerequisite of purity. The *genii* impart their wisdom only to those who are pure in spirit and kept from the pollution of sin (*a colluvione*

⁷ 'the *genius* is visible to few people, in fact only to those of unusual merit.'

⁸ 'it was by their particular support that Pythagoras and Socrates and Numa Pompilius became famous, not to mention the elder Scipio and, as some believe, Marius and Octavian, who was the first to bear the title of Augustus. There are also Hermes Trismegistus and Apollonius of Tyana and Plotinus.'

peccandi discretas) through immaculate association with the body (*immaculata corporis societate*), which is, by the way, the only place in pagan literature where *immaculatus* is used in its metaphorical meaning.

It is my contention that in this ideologically charged digression, Ammianus has made use of information he found in Plutarch. As Apuleius and Tertullian had done before him, Ammianus uses the term *genius* as the Latin equivalent of the Greek δαίμων (witness his quotation from Menander). This opens the way for Greek philosophical ideas on demonology, found with great frequency and prominence in Plutarch, to be connected to the archetypal Roman notion of the *genius*. Firstly, the notion that only persons of high moral standing are allowed actually to see their demon, is expressed in Plutarch's *Numa* 4.3: καὶ που λόγον ἔχει τὸν θεόν, οὐ φίλιππον οὐδὲ φίλορνιν, ἀλλὰ φιλάνθρωπον ὄντα, τοῖς διαφερόντως ἀγαθοῖς ἐθέλειν συνεῖναι, καὶ μὴ δυσχεραίνειν μηδὲ ἀτιμάζειν ἀνδρὸς ὁσίου καὶ σώφρονος ὁμιλίαν.⁹ The theme recurs in Plutarch's discussion of Socrates' δαιμόνιον in *De genio Socratis* 588 D-E, where we read: Σωκράτει δ' ὁ νοῦς καθαρὸς ὢν καὶ ἀπαθής, τῷ σώματι [μὴ] μικρὰ τῶν ἀναγκαίων χάριν καταμιγνὺς αὐτόν, εὐαφής ἦν καὶ λεπτὸς ὑπὸ τοῦ προσπεσόντος ὀξέως μεταβαλεῖν· τὸ δὲ προσπίπτον οὐ φθόγγον ἀλλὰ λόγον ἄν τις εἰκάσειε δαίμονος ἄνευ φωνῆς ἐφαπτόμενον αὐτῷ τῷ δηλούμένῳ τοῦ νοοῦντος.¹⁰

With regard to the Greek exempla listed by Ammianus, there is an ample choice of sources, apart from Plutarch, to which he may have turned. For Pythagoras I think of Jamblichus' biography and of the Eunapius' *Vitae sophistarum*, to stay within the circle of authors dear to Julian and his intellectual circle. The same Eunapius, in his *Life of Apollonius*, calls the sage of Tyana 'something between god and man'. About Plotinus we read in chapter 10 of his biography by Porphyry that when his guardian spirit was evoked in the temple of Isis at Rome, there appeared a god, not just one of the δαίμονες.

For the Roman exempla however, there are, as far as I have been able to find, no sources except Plutarch. The data concerning Socrates' Roman counterpart, Numa Pompilius, are taken from Plutarch's biogra-

⁹ 'there is some reason in supposing that Deity, who is not a lover of horses or birds, but of men, should be willing to consort with men of superlative goodness and should not dislike or disdain the company of a wise and holy man.'

¹⁰ 'Socrates, on the other hand, had an understanding which, being pure and free from passion, and commingling with the body but little, for necessary ends, was so sensitive and delicate as to respond at once to what reached him. What reached him, one would conjecture, was not spoken language, but the unuttered words of a daemon, making voiceless contact with his intelligence by their sense alone.'

phy (4.2), in which the nymph Egeria is explicitly called his daemon: Ἡγερίᾳ δαίμονι συνὼν ἐρώση καὶ συνδιαιτώμενος, εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ καὶ τὰ θεῖα πεπνυμένος γέγονεν.¹¹ Note that this statement is followed immediately by the passage from the *Numa* quoted above, which makes it even more likely that Ammianus had this passage in mind when he composed this digression.

About Marius' contacts with a daemon Ammianus, as we saw, is somewhat sceptical. The only candidate for the role of daemon seems to be the Syrian priestess Martha, mentioned in Plutarch's biography (17.2-3): καὶ γὰρ τινα Σύραν γυναῖκα, Μάρθαν ὄνομα, μαντεύεσθαι λεγομένην ἐν φορείῳ κατακειμένην σεμνῶς περιήγετο, καὶ θυσίας ἔθουεν ἐκείνης κελευούσης.¹²

Since Plutarch's *Life of Augustus* has not been transmitted, it is impossible to say whether Ammianus found this piece of information in Plutarch too, but I suspect that the apparition of the muleteer Eutychus and his mule Nicon with their telling names, mentioned both in Suetonius *Vita Augusti* 96 and in Plutarch's *Life of Antony* (65.5) Καίσαρι δὲ λέγεται ... ἄνθρωπος ἐλαύνων ὄνον ἀπαντῆσαι, πυθομένῳ δὲ τοῦνομα γνωρίσας αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν· ἔμοι μὲν Εὐτυχὸς ὄνομα, τῷ δ' ὄνῳ Νίκων,¹³ was interpreted in this way by Plutarch and taken over by Ammianus.

If I am right in thinking that Ammianus used Plutarch as a source, he did so not just for minor historical details, as in the digression on siege engines, but in programmatic statements about the position of Rome in the world and in digressions of a lay philosophical nature such as the one on the *genius*. The special ideological importance of this digression and its topicality will become clear if we realize that in the last decades of the fourth century, when Ammianus wrote his *Res gestae*, the *genius* was a highly controversial subject. Other pagan contemporary authors, such as Servius and Symmachus, emphatically mention the *genius* in their works. The fact that the cult of the *genius*, in whatever form, was expressly forbidden by Theodosius in a law from 392 (*Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.12) shows that the views a person held on this subject were a touchstone of his religious affiliation. That helps to explain why the Christian poet Prudentius, ten years later, devoted more than a

¹¹ 'the goddess (δαίμων) Egeria loved him and it was his communion with her that gave him a life of blessedness in the love of the gods and a wisdom more than human.'

¹² 'he used to carry about ceremoniously in a litter a Syrian woman, named Martha, who was said to have the gift of prophecy, and he would make sacrifices at her bidding.'

¹³ 'Caesar, we are told, ... was met by a man driving an ass. Caesar asked the man his name, and he, recognizing Caesar, replied: "My name is Prosper, and my ass's name is Victor."'

hundred lines in his *Contra Symmachum* to combat the belief in the Roman *genius*, culminating in the crushing statement (2.386) *genio qui nusquam est nec fuit umquam*.¹⁴ Ammianus' digression on the *genius* is one the instances in his work in which he polemicizes against Christianity without explicitly mentioning it.

It was my intention in this paper to add a footnote to Plutarch's *Rezeptionsgeschichte*. Hirzel had shown already that the intellectual circle around the emperor Julian, including writers like Eunapius and Himerius, read and admired Plutarch. Ammianus, who breathes the same spirit of pagan Neoplatonism, used Plutarch both incidentally and in digressions that are central to this last great work that belongs to the Roman tradition of historiography.

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¹³ 'the genius, which does not exist nor ever has existed'.

HISTORIA AUGUSTA

CHAPTER EIGHT

VERBA, NON RES

Über die Inventio in den Reden und Schriftstücken in der Historia Augusta

Die *HA* enthält bekanntlich etwa 150 Reden und Schriftstücke (68 Briefe, 31 Ansprachen an Einzelpersonen und *contiones*, 30 Senatsreden, 20 *senatus consulta* und *acclamationes*, zwei Edikte und eine *brevis munusculum*), die hier zusammenfassend als „Dokumente“ bezeichnet werden. Diesen Dokumenten, als Texttypus gesondert betrachtet, sind in der älteren Forschung, namentlich von Peter, Lécrivain und Homo,¹ Untersuchungen gewidmet worden, in denen die Authentizität Hauptgegenstand der Betrachtung war. Bei aller Verschiedenheit der Betrachtungsweisen führten diese Untersuchungen zu dem fast gleichlautenden Ergebnis, daß die Dokumente nicht als authentisches Material gelten können. In der neueren *HA*-Forschung sind die formellen Aspekte dieser Dokumente studiert worden. Einleitende und abschließende Formeln wurden von Szelest, Mouchova, Burian, Carlozzo besprochen;² überdies sind gemeinsame Themen in diesen Texten von den genannten Forschern erörtert worden.

In diesem Aufsatz möchte ich einiges bemerken über den Stoff, den der Autor in seinen Dokumenten bearbeitet hat. Es standen ihm anscheinend drei Wege offen. Er konnte entweder, was er in der *Narratio* gesagt hatte, als Ausgangspunkt nehmen, oder Reden und Schriftstücke, die er in seinen Quellen – oder sagen wir allgemeiner bei anderen Autoren – vorfand, bearbeiten, oder schließlich seiner eigenen Phantasie freien Lauf lassen. Diese drei Methoden hat der Autor auch wirklich benutzt. Sie unterscheiden sich durch das Maß an Freiheit, das der Verfasser für sich beansprucht, und durchlaufen die ganze Skala von schulgemäßer Paraphrase des eigenen Textes über eine mehr oder weniger respektvolle Adaptation anderer Autoren bis zur völlig freien Komposition, die er besonders im letzten Teil seines Werkes demonstriert. Ich beschränke mich hier auf die beiden ersten Arbeitsweisen des Autors,

¹ Peter 1892, 153–231; Lécrivain 1904, 1–48; Homo 1919; Homo 1920.

² Szelest 1971; Mouchova 1975, 39–47; Burian 1977; Carlozzo 1977.

die ich eben kurz als Paraphrase und Adaptation angesprochen habe. Trotz dieser Einschränkung ist die Zahl der einschlägigen Dokumente noch so groß, daß ich nur wenige davon heranziehen kann, um anhand dieser Beispiele das Verfahren des Autors zu zeigen.

Bei den Entlehnungen aus der eigenen Narratio kann man noch differenzieren zwischen Paraphrase der unmittelbar vorangehenden Narratio und Paraphrase entfernterer Teile des eigenen Textes. Bei der Adaptation kann auf analoge Weise ein Unterschied gemacht werden zwischen Nachbildungen anderer Autoren in der gleichen historischen Lage und Imitation in anderen Situationen, die wir mit der glücklichen Bezeichnung Kolbs (1972, 138-58) „Transpositionen“ nennen können.

Ein einfaches Beispiel für die Bearbeitung des in der vorangehenden Narratio gefundenen Stoffes bietet der Vergleich einer Senatsrede in der *Vita Alexandri Severi*, Kapitel 56,2-9, mit dem Text im 55. Kapitel.

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | AS 55,1-3 | AS 56,2-9 |
| 1 | <i>magno igitur apparatu inde in Persas profectus Artaxerxen regem potentissimum vicit (...)</i> | 2 <i>Persas, p.c., vicimus (...) scire debetis, quae illorum arma fuerint, qui apparatus.</i> |
| 2 | <i>fuso denique fugatoque tanto rege qui cum septingentis elephantis falcatisque mille et octingentis curribus ad bellum venerat, equitum multis milibus (...) de praeda, quam Persis diripuit, suum ditavit exercitum.</i> | 3 <i>iam primum elephantum septingenti idemque turriti cum sagittariis et onere sagittarum. ex his triginta cepimus, ducenti interfecti iacent, decem et octo perduximus.</i> |
| 3 | <i>tuncque primum servi Persae apud Romanos fuerunt, quos quidem (...) acceptis pretiis reddidit (...)</i> | 4 <i>falcati currus mille DCCC. adducere interfectorum animalium currus ducentos potuimus, sed id, quia et fingi poterat, facere supersedimus.</i> |
| | | 5 <i>centum et viginti milia equitum eorum fudimus, cataphractarios, quos illi clibanarios vocant, decem milia in bello interemimus (...)</i> |
| | | 6 <i>multos Persarum cepimus eosque vendidimus. terras interamnianas neglectas ab impura illa belua recepimus.</i> |
| | | 7 <i>Artaxerxen, potentissimum regem tam iure quam nomine, fustum fugavimus (...) et qua ducta fuerant quondam signa nostrorum, ea rex ipse signis effugit relictis (...)</i> |
| | | 8 <i>(...) milites divites redeunt (...)</i> |

Die Übereinstimmungen von Narratio und Dokument sind evident. Die Angaben in der *Narratio* erscheinen in der gleichen Reihenfolge im Dokument. Nur steht der Name des besiegten Königs Artaxerxes mit der livianischen Wendung *fusus fugatusque* im Dokument am Ende, vermutlich um mit der Flucht des Königs als Gegenbild der Niederlage bei Carrhae die Rede effektiv abzuschließen. Die Abweichungen enthalten nähere Einzelheiten, wie z.B. über die Bewaffnung der Elephanten, und quasi-exakte Zahlenangaben. Interessant ist neben der Anspielung auf die Schlacht bei Carrhae der Satz im vierten Paragraphen der Rede. Hier sagt Alexander, er habe darauf verzichtet, zweihundert Wagen heimzubringen, weil es sich auch um einen Schwindel handeln könnte (*quia et fingi poterat*). Die Bemerkung dient in erster Linie dazu, die Zuverlässigkeit der Berichterstattung des Kaisers hervorzuheben, der sogar den Schein von Betrug vermeiden möchte. Die Hinzufügung kann auch als eigene Aussage des Verfassers, mit der er seine Arbeitsweise entlarvt, gewertet werden, wie dies Rösger in seiner Erläuterung zu der Stelle getan hat.³ Zuletzt finden wir im fünften Paragraphen der Rede die hinzugefügte Bemerkung über die zehntausend *catafractarii*, *quos illi clibanarios vocant*, die der Kaiser getötet haben will, eine Bemerkung, die bekanntlich fast wörtlich mit Ammianus 16,10,8 *cataphracti equites quos clibanarios dictitant* übereinstimmt. Auf das Werk Ammians werde ich noch zurückkommen. So groß ist die Übereinstimmung von Narratio und Rede in diesem Fall, daß wir eben in diesen kleinen – spielerischen – Additionen den Sinn des Dokumentes zu erblicken haben.

Vergleichbare Dokumente finden sich vor allem in den Viten des Macrinus und des Diadumenus. Ein Beispiel ist OM 5,9 und die *capita ex oratione* an den Senat im 6. Kapitel.

2.

OM 5,9

ad senatum deinde litteras misit de morte Antonini, divum illum appellans excusansque se et iurans quod de caede illius nescierit. ita scelero suo more hominum perditorum iunxit periurium, a quo incipere decuit hominem improbum, cum ad senatum scriberet.

OM 6,2-4

- 2 *vellemus, p.c., et incolumi Antonino nostro et revecti cum triumpho vestram clementiam videre. tunc demum enim florente re p. et omnes felices essemus, et sub eo principe viveremus, quem nobis Antoninorum loco di dederant.*
- 3 *verum quia id evenire per tumultum militarem non potuit,*
- 4 *(...) dein honores divinos (...) decernimus ei viro in cuius verba iuravimus (...).*

³ Rösger 1976, 526 ad AS 56,5

Weil der Autor Macrinus selbst als Hauptschuldigen an der Ermordung Caracallas bezeichnet hat, wird dieser durch die Oratio als *impudens* und *periurus* charakterisiert, wie in der Einleitung zum Brief explizit gesagt worden ist. Die Erwähnung des Treuschwurs im vierten Paragraphen und die Versicherung, daß Caracalla ihm, Macrinus, den Auftrag gegeben hätte, das Attentat zu rächen, falls er am Leben geblieben wäre, sind mit Rücksicht auf diese Charakterisierung in das Dokument aufgenommen worden. Wir brauchen Information aus dem weiteren Kontext für ein richtiges Verständnis einiger Details. Die an sich befremdende Bezeichnung *vestra clementia* für die Senatoren gehört zur Senatsverherrlichung, die auch in den Reden von Marcus und Alexander Severus in AC 12,3 und AS 9,1 zu der gleichen Wortwahl führt. *Omnes felices essemus* enthält eine Anspielung auf den Beinamen Felix, den man Macrinus, wie wir im elften Kapitel lesen können, verliehen hat. Die Formulierung *quem nobis Antoninorum loco di dederant* erklärt sich aus dem Gedankenkomplex über das *nomen Antoninum*, der die ganze Vita beherrscht, und in dem aus dem Namen Antoninus ein Kaisertitel gemacht wird. Die Bedeutung ist also „um die Stelle eines Antoninus zu bekleiden“. Aus der *Vita Diadumeni* vergleiche ich noch die Paragraphen 7,1 und 7,5-7.

3.

Dd. 7,1

exstat epistula Opili Macrini (...) qua gloriatur non tam se ad imperium pervenisse, qui esset secundus imperii, quam quod Antoniniani nominis esset pater factus (...)

Dd. 7,5-7

- 5 'Opilius Macrinus Noniae Celsae coniugi. quid boni adepti sumus, mi uxor, caret aestimatione. et fortassis de imperio me putes dicere – non magnum est istud, quod etiam indignis fortuna concessit, –: Antonini pater factus sum, Antonini mater es facta.
- 6 o nos beatos, o fortunatam domum, praeclaram laudem nunc demum felicitis imperii.
- 7 di faxint et bona Iuno, quam colis, ut et ille Antonini meritum effingat, et ego, qui sum pater Antonini, dignus omnibus videar.'

Der Brief illustriert abermals das zentrale Thema der *vitae Macrini* und *Diadumeni*, die Verherrlichung des *nomen Antoninianum*. Der hochtrabende Stil des Briefes paßt gut zur schulmeisterlichen Schilderung des Kaisers in OM 4,3. *Fortassis* verwendet der Autor immer an gehobenen

Stellen wie z.B. in Briefen (*Val.* 3,3; *Pr.* 4,3), in einem Gebet (*AS* 17,4) und in programmatischen Aussagen (*A* 10,1; *Pr.* 1,3). In seiner Begeisterung spricht der Kaiser in einem iambischen Senarius *o nos beatos, o fortunatam domum*, den er übrigens mit den folgenden Worten *plaeclaram laudem* buchstäblich aus Cicero *Cat.* 2,10 entnommen hat. Die archaische Gebetsformel *di faxint* findet sich auch in einer anderen Rede *CLA* 13,10 *di faxint ut ne alii quidem velint*.⁴ Die Hinzufügung *et bona Juno* (so auch Vergil *A.* 1,734) ist in diesem Kontext (*Antonini mater es facta*) sehr wohl am Platz.

Als letztes Beispiel für die Verwendung des unmittelbaren Kontextes wähle ich *Gd.* 26,4-27,2 neben 27,5-8.

4.	
<i>Gd.</i> 26,4-27,2	<i>Gd.</i> 27,5-8
4 <i>fecit iter in Moesiam atque in ipso procinctu, quidquid hostium in Thraciis fuit delevit, fugavit, expulit atque summovit.</i>	oratio ad senatum (...)
5 <i>inde per Syriam Antiochiam venit, quae a Persis iam tenebatur. illic frequentibus proeliis pugnavit et vicit ac Sapore Persarum rege summoto,</i>	5 <i>'post haec, p.c., quae, dum iter agimus, gesta sunt quaeque ubique singulis triumphis digna sunt actitata, etiam Persas, ut brevi multa conectam, ab Antiochensium cervicibus, quas iam nexas Persico ferro gerebant, et reges Persarum et leges amovimus.</i>
6 <i>qui post Artaxerxen regnabat, et Antiochiam recepit et Carras et Nisibin, quae omnia sub Persarum imperio erant (...)</i>	6 <i>Carras deinde ceterasque urbes imperio Romano reddidimus. Nisibin usque pervenimus et, si dii faverint, Ctesiphonta usque veniemus.</i>
27.2 <i>sed haec omnia per Misiatheum, socerum Gordiani eundemque praefectum, gesta sunt.</i>	7 <i>valeat tantum Misiatheus praefectus et parens noster, cuius ductu et dispositione et haec transegimus et reliqua transigemus'.</i>

Narratio und Dokument wurden von Peter (1892, 212-3) kurz miteinander verglichen. Er war auf Grund dreier Unterschiede der Meinung, daß der Brief nicht von „Capitolinus“ geschrieben sein kann. In 26.6 las er *Sapores (...) summoto post Artaxansen et Antiochiam recepit* und diese Angabe vermißte er im Dokument. Der Name Artaxansa für Artaxata findet sich aber sonst nirgendwo. Ich ziehe deshalb die Emendation Hohls *qui post Artaxerxen regnabat* vor. Ein zweiter Unterschied lag,

⁴ Auch hier wieder Einfluß Ciceros: *Ver.* 3,81 *di faxint, ne sit alter*.

⁵ Die Einleitung der Oratio *cuius partem indidi ut ex eo vera cognosceres* (§4) sieht dem programmatischen Satz im ersten Kapitel der Macrinus-Vita *mores (...), qui re vera sciendi*

nach Peter, in der Tatsache, daß in der Narratio Antiochia in den Händen der Perser ist, in der Oratio aber nicht. Der Satz *ab Antiochensium cervicibus reges Persarum et leges amovimus* bedeutet allerdings nur, daß Gordianus die Drohung der Perser verhütet hat. Die Phrase aus Sallust *hostis in cervicibus iam Italiae agentes ab Alpibus summovi* (Hist. 2,98,4), die Peter heranzieht,⁶ hat die Wortwahl bestimmt. Die Erweiterung *quas iam nexas Persico ferro gerebant* aber, mit der Metapher des Jochs des Siegers, kann m.E. nur bedeuten, daß auch in der Oratio Antiochia als von den Persern erobert dargestellt wird.

Zuletzt fehlt im 26. Kapitel die Erwähnung Ctesiphons, wo der dritte Gordian auch wirklich gefallen ist. Hier bietet die Oratio also mehr als die Narratio. Nun wird das Erreichen, bzw. Erobern Ctesiphons bei allen in der HA beschriebenen persischen Expeditionen genannt und zwar in formelhafter Fassung: S 16,1 *Ctesiphontem pulso rege pervenit*; Gall. 12,1 *denique Ctesiphontem esse perventum*; T 15,4 *Ctesiphontem usque Saporem (...) persecutus*; T 30,6 *fugato Sapore Ctesiphontem usque pervenit*; Car. 8,1 *Ctesiphontem usque pervenit*. Der Eindruck, daß die Erwähnung Ctesiphons in der HA ein fester Bestandteil in der Beschreibung persischer Expeditionen ist, wird noch bestätigt durch die bekannte Stelle Car. 9,1 *vim fati quandam esse ut Romanus princeps Ctesiphontem transire non possit*.⁷ Hinzu kommt, daß sich in der Formulierung *pervenimus* – *veniemus* eine vom Autor beliebte figura zeigt, mit der sich *transegimus* – *transigemus* im 7. Paragraphen vergleichen läßt.⁸ Schließlich finden wir die Phrase *si di faverint* (§6) nicht weniger als sechsmal in Dokumenten. Diese Überlegungen führen zu dem Ergebnis, daß das Dokument keine wirkliche Information enthält, die in der Narratio fehlt, und daß wir die Hand des Autors in Thematik (Ctesiphon), Stilmitteln und Wortwahl entdecken.

In den bisher angeführten Dokumenten geht der Verfasser mit Zurückhaltung vor. Der Stoff ist dem unmittelbaren Kontext entnommen worden, und der Autor entfernt sich nicht allzuweit davon. Was die Viten des Macrinus und Diadumenus betrifft, möchte ich noch darauf hinweisen, daß Narratio und Dokumente höchstwahrscheinlich Nachbildungen aus Marius Maximus enthalten, in dessen Biographien das

sunt, (...) sed ex parte, ut ex ea cetera colligantur (OM 1,5) sehr ähnlich.

⁶ Man könnte auch an Cic. *ad Brut.* 1,15,7 *cum (...) omne praesidium esset in puero qui a cervicibus nostris avertisset Antonium* denken.

⁷ Zur Ctesiphon-Thematik in der Historia Augusta vgl. ausführlich Straub 1952, 123ff.

⁸ Gewissermaßen ein verbales Polypoton. Die figura wird nicht mit einem eigenen Namen bezeichnet.

Thema der Antonini eine zentrale Stellung eingenommen haben muß (Barnes 1970, 73-4). Es ist daher wahrscheinlich, daß der Autor hier nicht nur seinen eigenen Text paraphrasiert, sondern auch adaptierend vorgeht.

Ein verwandtes Verfahren finden wir in den sogenannten „sekundären“ *vitae* AC, PN und CIA. Hier hat der Autor seinen Stoff meistens nicht dem unmittelbaren Kontext entnommen, sondern Angaben aus den parallelen primären *vitae* (vor allem MA und S) zur Ausstattung seiner Dokumente benutzt.⁹ Das deutlichste Beispiel einer Stoffparaphrase aus der *Vita Marci* ist die Oratio von Marcus an den Senat in AC 12,2-10. Hier folgt der Verfasser der *Vita MA* 24,5-26,13. In seine Paraphrase introduziert er Elemente, die später wieder aufgegriffen werden, wie das Spiel mit dem Begriff *censura* (§3), hier fast gleichbedeutend mit *severitas*. In der *Vita Valeriani* 5,4-8 wird dieser Begriff zu phantastischen Senatsakklationen Veranlassung geben.¹⁰ Im selben Paragraphen finden wir als zweites Element die *clementia senatus*, der wir auch in der Macrinus-Vita begegneten. Die flachen Kapitel 24-6 der Marcus-Vita werden in der Paraphrase mit einer Entlehnung aus Sallust *Cat.* 52,12 (*sint divites, sint securi, sint vagi et liberi*), die Klebs (1892, 538) notiert hat, geschmückt. Im 5. Paragraphen ist zu verzeichnen *utinam possem multos etiam ex inferis excitare*, das wieder aus Ciceros zweiter *Catilinaria* stammt: §20 *si salvi esse velint Sulla sit eis ab inferis excitandus*.

In der *Vita CIA* 12,5-12, einem Brief von Severus an den Senat, in dem er sich über die Sympathie beschwert, die der Senat Albinus entgegengebracht hat, finden wir Elemente aus der Parallelvita Severi. Mit typischer Übertreibung wird die sachliche Bemerkung aus S 23,2 *olei vero tantum ut per quinquennium non solum urbis usibus, sed et totius Italiae, quae oleo eget, sufficeret* in dem Brief mit *tantum olei detuli quantum rerum natura vix habuit* (§7) wiedergegeben. In derselben Weise wie in AS 56,7 fügt der Autor historische Beispiele hinzu, indem er im 10. Paragraphen Severus das Verhalten des Senats ihm gegenüber mit dem Piso gegenüber vergleichen läßt.¹¹ Weniger glücklich war der Einfall des Ver-

⁹ Für die Dokumente in der *Vita AC* siehe Klebs (1888); Schwartz (1964); Baldwin (1976).

¹⁰ Vgl. auch den Tyrannen Censorinus mit seiner *disciplina censoria* in T 33,3; Syme 1968, 54; John 1976, 122-8.

¹¹ Magie in seiner Loeb-Ausgabe ebenso wie Rösger in den Anmerkungen der Artemis-Ausgabe (p. 450, *Anm.* 56) verweisen hier auf den Aufstand des C. Calpurnius Piso gegen Nero. In diesem Fall war der Senat nicht gerade loyal dem Kaiser gegenüber (Tac. *Ann.* 15,48 *coniuratione in quam certatim nomina dederant senatores, eques, miles* (...)). Eher sollte man an C. Calpurnius Piso Crassus Licinianus (Crassus Frugi in H 5,5-6, vgl. Dio C. 68,16,2) unter Trajan denken.

fassers, Severus wegwerfend über Albinus' Herkunft aus Africa reden zu lassen. Das paßt ausgezeichnet zu den negativen Bemerkungen über diese Provinz in *Max.* 18,1; 19,2 und *Gd.* 14,1, aber es mutet fremd an aus dem Mund eben dieses Kaisers. Komisch wirkt es auch, daß in diesem Brief die Zugehörigkeit des Albinus zur Familie der Ceionii Albini, im 4. Kapitel postuliert und mit einem Dokument bekräftigt, hier im 8. Paragraphen als Erfindung abgetan wird (*CLA* 12.8: *fingentem, quod de Ceioniorum stemmate sanguinem duceret*). Übrigens gehören die eben genannten Briefe zu den am wenigsten kühnen Dokumenten in den „sekundären“ *vitae*, in die der Autor auch erfundene Reden und Schriftstücke aufgenommen hat, die den total fingierten Dokumenten im letzten Teil der *HA* in *Inventio* und *Wortwahl* sehr ähnlich sind.

Auf der Suche nach Stoff für seine Dokumente hat sich der Autor nicht auf zusammenhängende Stellen im direkten oder entfernten Kontext beschränkt. In vielen Fällen können wir Einzelheiten in Briefen und Reden auf beiläufige Bemerkungen oder auf Themen in anderen *vitae* zurückführen. Ich nenne drei Beispiele: In *AC* 1,7-9, einem Brief des Verus an Marcus, in dem er ihn vor Avidius Cassius warnt, der ihn selbst einen *luxoriosus morio* und Marcus eine *philosophia anicula* gescholten hatte, fährt er überraschend mit *ego hominem non odi* fort. Wie ich meine, liegt hier *Ethopoea* vor auf Grund des positiven Bildes, das in den *Viten OM* und *Dd.* von Verus gezeichnet wird. Er verkörpert in der Reihe der Antonini die *bonitas*: *Dd.* 7,4 *ut scirent omnes Antoninos pluris fuisse quam deos, ac trium principum amore, quo sapientia. bonitas, pietas consecrata sit, in Antonino pietas, in Vero bonitas, in Marco sapientia*.

In der *Vita Val.* 1 warnt der König Velsolus Sapor vor der Rache der Römer. Er nennt wiederum historische Präzedenzfälle und verweist auf das Schicksal der Gallier, Afri und des Mithradates, die nach anfänglichen Erfolgen dennoch am Ende besiegt worden sind.¹² Die gleiche, zweifellos traditionelle Reihe kehrt im Proömium zur *Probus-Vita* 1,4 zurück: *bella Punica, terror Gallicus, motus Pontici*.

In einem Fall berichtet ein späteres Dokument ein Stück aus einer früheren *Vita*. In *Cl.* 14,15 schließt die *brevis munerum* für Claudius mit der Bemerkung: *haec autem omnia idcirco specialiter non quasi tribuno sed quasi duci detuli, quia vir talis est, ut ei plura etiam deferenda sint*. In der *Vita Aureliani* 9,2 sagt der gleiche Scribent, der Kaiser Valerianus:

¹² Mutatis mutandis wie Mithradates dies selber in dem Brief an König Arsaces in *Sall. Hist. fr.* IV 69 getan hatte.

vellemus quidem singulis quibusque devotissimis rei publicae viris multo maiora deferre compendia, quam eorum dignitas postulat (...) sed facit rigor publicus, ut accipere de provinciarum inflationibus ultra ordinis sui gradum nemo plus possit. Im ersten Fall dient die Freigebigkeit des Kaisers dazu, die große Bedeutung des Claudius zu illustrieren, im zweiten herrscht ein anderes Lieblingsthema vor, die Sorge um die schwer belasteten Provinzialen (cf. White 1967, 116 n.5).

Nach der Bearbeitung von Material aus der *HA* selbst wende ich mich jetzt der Adaptation anderer Autoren zu. Ich fange mit Herodian an, dem der Autor in der Reihe *Max.*, *Gd.*, *MB* folgt. In der ersten Vita gibt er zunächst eine Beschreibung von Maximinus' Expedition in Germanien in genauer Nachfolge von Herodian 7,2,3-7. Nur präzisiert der Verfasser das unbestimmte πολλήν γῆν ἐπῆλθεν in 7,2,3 seiner Gewohnheit nach und ändert es in *ingressus igitur Germaniam Transrhenanam per XXX vel XL milia barbarici soli vicos incendit*. Dies ist von Homo zu Unrecht als ein Indiz für eine von Herodian unabhängige Quelle gewertet worden. Herodian beendet seinen Bericht mit der Bemerkung, daß der Kaiser über die Expedition einen Brief geschrieben hatte. Unser Autor fühlt sich dadurch veranlaßt, das Dokument zu liefern, und bietet im 12. Kapitel *litteras Romam ad senatum et populum misit se dictante conscriptas* (*Max.* 12,5), die eine indirekte Charakterisierung des barbarischen Haudegens enthält. Dies erreicht er durch den unbeholfenen Stil des ersten Satzes: *non possumus tantum, p.c., loqui, quantum fecimus* (12,6). Man vergleiche den Anfang der in 13,2 folgenden Oratio: *brevi tempore, p. c., tot bella gessi quot nemo veterum. tantum praedae (...) attuli, quantum sperari non potuit*. Als *miles gloriosus* wird der Kaiser charakterisiert, wenn er die Zahlenangaben in 12,1 erhöht und von *XL vel L milia* spricht. Es handelt sich hier um eine beabsichtigte Ethopoea, wie aus der abschließenden Bemerkung des Autors (§7-8) hervorgeht: *Aelius Cordus dicit hanc omnino ipsius orationem fuisse*.¹³ *credibile est; quid enim in hac est, quod non posset barbarus miles?*

Die *contio*, *Max.* 18,1-3, in der Maximinus auf den Bericht über die Erhebung Gordians in Africa reagiert, können wir genauer mit Herodian vergleichen, weil dieser in der gleichen Lage den Kaiser eine Rede an die Soldaten halten läßt (7,8,4-8). Es ist sehr auffallend, daß die Rede Herodians mit großer Sorgfalt geschrieben worden ist, was Herodian plausibel zu machen versucht, indem er uns mitteilt, sie sei von Freun-

¹³ Vergleiche *se dictante* im 5. Paragraphen.

den des Kaisers verfaßt worden. Die Rede in der Vita ist viel kürzer und weniger kompliziert. Die Übereinstimmungen beruhen zum Teil auf einfacher Entlehnung. So wird bei Herodian Gordianus charakterisiert als ἐν ἐσχάτῳ γηρᾷ παραφρονοῦντα. Unser Autor macht daraus *Gordianus senex debilis et morti vicinus*. An anderer Stelle variiert er Herodian bewußt. Bei diesem macht der Kaiser die Karthager lächerlich: ἀλλὰ γὰρ (μή τι ἄρα καὶ καταγέλαστον εἰπεῖν) καρχηδόνιοι μεμῆνασι. Die Vita kennzeichnet die Afrikaner nicht als lächerlich im Vergleich zu den Persern und Germanen, sondern als sprichwörtlich unzuverlässig: *Afri fidem fregerunt. nam quando tenuerunt?* Eben deshalb dreht er Herodianus' ersten Satz gerade um: *conmiliones, rem vobis notam proferimus* gegenüber ἅπιστα μὲν οἶδα καὶ παράδοξα λέξων πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Im zweiten Paragraphen ist der Ton nacheinander sarkastisch (*sanctissimi p.c. illi*), beschuldigend (*qui et Romulum et Caesarem occiderunt*) und klagend (*cum pro his pugnarem*). Hier wurde der Autor durch eine Bemerkung inspiriert, die bei Herodian nach dem Schluß der Rede steht (§9) βλάσφημά τε πολλὰ ἐς τὴν σύγκλητον ἀπορρίψας. In der Cohortatio schließt er sich Herodian wieder näher an mit den Worten *quorum omnium bona vos habebitis*, mit denen zu vergleichen ist: ὡς ὑπάρξαι ἐμοὶ τε ὑμῖν τὰ ἐκείνων πάντα δοῦναι, ὑμῖν τε ἀδεῶς λαβοῦσι καρποῦσθαι.

Ein zweites Beispiel einer aus Herodian entnommenen Rede ist die Ansprache des Mauricius an die Tysdritanen (*Gd.* 8,1-4). Sie wurde durch die Rede des anonymen Aufrührers in Herodian 7,5,5-6 hervorgerufen, ausgesprochen im Schlafzimmer des Gordian, wie aus der Vergleichung von 7,5,5 δυὸ κινδύνων προκειμένων, τοῦ μὲν παρόντος, τοῦ δὲ ἐν ἀμφιβόλῳ τύχῃ, ἐλέσθαι σε δεῖ und *Gd.* 8,6 *evitandi periculi gratia, quod Maximinianis necessario, fautoribus dubie imminebat*¹⁴ hervorgeht. In der eigentlichen Rede muß *nisi facto imperatore salvi esse non possumus* als Nachfolge von Herodian 7,5,1 betrachtet werden: μόνην ἤδεσαν ἑαυτοῖς σωτηρίαν ὑπάρχουσιν, εἰ τὰ τολμηθέντα αὐτοῖς ἀυξήσαιεν ἔργοις μείζουσι. Ebenso wie bei unserem Autor folgt auch bei Herodian nach dieser Ansprache die Akklamation (*Gd.* 8,4 und Herod. 7,5,7).

Der Grund, weshalb unser Autor die Rede Herodians anders anlegt, könnte meiner Meinung nach sein, daß er seinen Dokumenten den Anschein der Authentizität zu geben bemüht ist. Wenn es sich um Reden handelt, ist das nur möglich, wenn diese in der Öffentlichkeit gehalten

¹⁴ Kolb (1978, 143-4) hat gezeigt, daß der hier reproduzierte Text des Codex P einwandfrei ist.

worden sind, so daß sie hätten aufgezeichnet werden können. Daher sind alle Reden in der *HA* vor dem Senat, dem Volk oder den Truppen gehalten worden. Die Privatunterhaltung zwischen Ballista und Macrianus in *T* 12 ist nur scheinbar eine Ausnahme, da davon kein geringerer als Maeonius Astyanax berichtet hat. Die Rede des Mauricius war in dieser Hinsicht ein Grenzfall. Ich vermute, daß der Autor eben deshalb hinzufügt (*Gd.* 7,4): *nobilissima posthac oratione* und *velut contionabundus*.

Diese Vergleiche vermitteln ein deutliches Bild von der Art und Weise, wie unser Autor seine Quellen benutzt hat. Die sachlichen Angaben werden eigenmächtig verwendet, der Stil wird geändert, die Lage, in der eine Rede abgehalten worden ist, wird den eigenen Bedürfnissen angepaßt. Wenn seine persönliche Voreingenommenheit es verlangt, gibt er seinen Figuren das Gegenteil in den Mund von dem, was er in seinen Quellen vorgefunden hat.

Zum Schluß ein Dokument, in dem wir m.E. eine Adaptation aus Ammianus Marcellinus erblicken können. Ich meine den Brief des Kaisers Valerianus in *A* 11. Den Zusammenhang bilden die Kapitel *A* 10-15 über die Adrogatio des Aurelianus durch Ulpius Crinitus, *dux Illyriciani limitis et Thracici*, wie er in *A* 13,1 genannt wird. Die Episode wird mit *iudicia* des Kaisers Valerianus über Aurelianus eingeleitet, die der Verfasser in *Ulpia bibliotheca inter libros linteos* gefunden hat, und über deren Inhalt er in dem dieser Episode vorangehenden Paragraphen 10,1 sagt: *frivola haec fortasse et nimis levia esse videantur, sed curiositas nihil recusat*. Kein Wunder daher, daß Fisher (1929, 141) über den historischen Wert dieser reichlich mit Dokumenten versehenen Kapitel wie folgt urteilt: „this long passage does not contain a single detail of any historical worth. In all probability no such man as Ulpius Crinitus ever existed; and, if he did, he did not adopt Aurelianus, since Aurelianus's name shows no trace of the alleged adoption“. Als Ausgangspunkt der Phantasie nannte Fisher (und Hartke 1951, 235 n.4) den Namen der Gattin Aurelianus, Ulpia Severina. „The vita may have invented for the lady a father, named Ulpius Crinitus, and have made him into an adopted father instead of a father in law“. Das ist vorstellbar, aber das Cognomen zeigt, daß mehr im Spiel ist. Wir kennen es als Cognomen des Kaisers Traianus aus *Eutr. Brev.* 8,1,2: *successit ei Ulpius Crinitus Traianus*. Hiermit wird die Assoziation mit diesem Kaiser hervorgerufen, die der Autor in *A* 10,2 mit den Worten *qui se de Traiani genere referebat et fortissimi re vera viri et Traiani simillimi* nachdrücklich hervorhebt. Dieser

Ulpus Crinitus ist gleichsam dazu bestimmt, von der Vorzüglichkeit der Adoption zu sprechen (14,5): *quod et familiae meae amicum ac proprium fuit*. Es ist durchaus möglich, daß der Autor mit dieser Herausbeschwörung des Traianus aktualisierende Absichten verfolgt. Theodosius wird ja in der zeitgenössischen Panegyrik, Geschichtsschreibung und Poesie als Nachkomme Trajans bezeichnet.¹⁵ In diesem Zusammenhang interessiert uns aber weniger die Frage nach dem Wozu als die nach dem Woher. Im 11. Kapitel bietet uns der Autor, wie gesagt, einen Brief Valerians, in dem dieser Aurelianus über den Kampf mit den Gothen instruiert. Er soll sie „auf dem Kriegsschauplatz von Nikopolis“, nach der Hohlschen Übersetzung, angreifen, „damit uns aus der Erkrankung des Crinitus kein Schaden entstehe“. Ituräische, armenische, arabische und sarazenische Truppen, die *legio III Felix* und achthundert *catafractarii* werden ihm zur Verfügung gestellt. Vier Generäle mit germanischen Namen, wie wir sie sonst in der *Historia Augusta* nicht lesen, Hariomundus, Haldagates, Hildomundus und Carioviscus, werden ihm zur Seite stehen. Im 6. Paragraphen bekommt er den Auftrag *quaerere, ubi carrago sit hostium, et vere scire, quanti qualesque sint*. Wie ist der Autor in einem von Anfang bis Ende fingierten Brief zu diesen genauen Angaben gekommen? Die Antwort lautet, wie ich meine, daß er die Beschreibung in Ammianus Marcellinus *Res gestae* 31,7 der Kriegsvorbereitungen vor der Schlacht bei Adrianopel herangezogen und die Ereignisse des Jahres 378 in die sechziger Jahre des 3. Jahrhunderts zurückprojiziert hat. Ich stelle die Abschnitte zusammen:

<i>Vita Aureliani</i>	Amm. Marc. RG 31
10,3 Die Adrogatio des Aurelianus wird vorbereitet in Byzantium unter Afsicht von Valerianus.	7,1 Kaiser Valens sendet die Generäle Profuturus und Traianus nach Constantinopel voraus.
11,1 Aurelianus soll als Stellvertreter des Crinitus die Gothen bekämpfen. Der Kaiser gibt ihm den	2 (...) <i>legiones ab Armenia ductas opposuere (...) barbaris.</i> 5 Der General Frigeridus entzieht sich dem Kampf <i>articularum dolore praepeditus</i>

¹⁵ Hartke (1951, 324-351) der 'Ulpus Crinitus' aber nicht in Betracht zieht. Syme (1971, 89-112) hat ihm den gebührenden Platz eingeräumt im Kapitel 'The fame of Trajan'. Ich möchte in diesem Zusammenhang noch auf die Übereinstimmung hinweisen zwischen *Epit. de Caes.* 48.8 *fuit autem Theodosius moribus et corpore Traiano similis, quantum scripta veterum et picturae docent* und A 10.2 *Ulpii Criniti, qui se de Traiani genere referebat, et fortissimi re vera viri et Traiani simillimi, qui pictus est cum eodem Aureliano in templo Solis.*

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|---|--|
| <p>Auftrag <i>suscipe bellum a parte Nicopolis, ne nobis aegritudo Criniti obsit</i></p> <p>2 Aurelianus bekommt den Rang eines <i>magister militum</i></p> <p>3 Aufzählung der ihm unterstellten Truppen</p> <p>4 Vier germanische Generäle werden ihm helfen</p> <p>6 A. soll <i>quaerere ubi carrago sit hostium (...)</i>
<i>ego de te tantum spero quantum de Traiano, si viveret, posset sperare res publica.</i></p> | <p>6 <i>Romani duces (...) Gothos quidquid molirentur sagaciter observabant</i></p> <p>7 <i>(Gothorum manus) ad carraginem quam ita ipsa appellant aliti velocitate regressae (...).</i></p> <p>11,1 Traianus wird abgelöst von Sebastianus: <i>Sebastiano pedestris exercitus cura commissa quem regebat antea Traianus</i></p> <p>11,2 Sebastianus beginnt den Kampf gegen die Gothen <i>circa Beroeam et Nicopolim agentibus.</i></p> |
|---|--|

Der Name des Heermeisters Traianus im historischen Bericht von Ammianus hat den Autor, wie ich vermute, zur Schöpfung des Ulpius Crinitus als Adoptivvater des Aurelianus inspiriert. Traianus wird von Valens nach Constantinopel vorausgesandt, der fiktive Ulpius Crinitus dankt dem Kaiser Valerianus in Byzanz dafür, daß er ihm Aurelianus als *vicarius* zugewiesen hat. Valens ernennt Amm. Marc. 31,11,1 Sebastianus als Nachfolger des Traianus. Er sucht den Kampf mit den Gothen, die sich in der Nähe von Beroea und Nicopolis aufhalten, womit sich der Auftrag im Dokument in A 11,1 vergleichen läßt. In der Vita ist die Rede von der Erkrankung des Ulpius Crinitus, wie sich bei Ammianus Frigeridus wegen eines Gichtanfalls dem Kampf entzieht. Bei der Aufzählung der Truppen in A 11,3 fallen die armenischen Truppen auf und die *catafractarii*, denen wir schon in AS 56,5 begegnet waren. Zuletzt finden wir im fiktiven Dokument die *carrago hostium* wieder, die bei Ammianus nur in 31,7 mit diesem Wort angedeutet wird.¹⁶ Wir sehen also in diesem Kapitel der Aureliansvita eine einmalige Häufung von

¹⁶ Straub (1952, 19ff.), hatte in seinen *Studien zur Historia Augusta* aufgrund der Benutzung des Wortes *carrago* in Cl. 8,5 vermutet, daß die Beschreibung des Gothenkrieges in der Vita auf Ammians Bericht über die Ereignisse des Jahres 378 in *Res gestae* 31,7 zurückzuführen sei. Später, in *Heidnische Geschichtsapologetik in der christlichen Spätantike* (1963), XIV, hat er mit Zurückhaltung über die Beweiskraft solcher isolierten Bezüge gesprochen. Ablehnend reagiert Rosen (1982, 179-80). Interessant in dieser Hinsicht ist auch die Bemerkung von Chastagnol (1964, 57): 'Ce qui demeure indémontrable réellement si le passage entier dans lequel il (sc. das Wort *carrago*) figure n'a pas été copié sur cet auteur.' In diesem Dokument A 11 befindet sich das Wort immerhin in einem Kontext in dem mehrere Einzelheiten an Ammian erinnern.

Parallelen mit Ammianus, die eben deshalb aufschlußreich sind, weil der Brief ein Phantasiestück ist, so daß die wörtlichen Obereinstimmungen nicht damit erklärt werden können, daß sie durch die Gleichheit oder Vergleichbarkeit einer historischen Lage verursacht worden sind.¹⁷

Wir haben die Arbeitsweise des Autors bei der Komposition seiner Dokumente zu verfolgen versucht und gesehen, wie er sich in seiner Inven-tio von einer Paraphrase der eigenen Narratio über die eigenmächtige Adaptation von ihm selbst genannter Quellen bis zur assoziativen Verwendung anderer Autoren bewegt, die er, um seine Fiktion aufrechtzu-erhalten, nicht nennt. Der Autor verspricht seinen Lesern wiederholt *res, non verba*. Er macht genau das Gegenteil von dem, was er verspricht. Die Leser können sich aber damit trösten, daß es zwischen dem histori-schen Wert des Werkes und seinem literarischen Reiz eine *ratio inversa* gibt.

Dieser Artikel wurde ursprünglich veröffentlicht in *BHAC* 1984/1985, Bonn 1987, 157-74.

¹⁷ Syme (1968, 70): „The idiosyncrasy of a writer tells, his selection, his inventions. Therefore, and not by paradox, it will be safer to argue from fact to fiction than from one sequence of facts to another.”

CHAPTER NINE

THE AUTHOR'S LITERARY CULTURE

Long before intertextuality was an accepted literary term, the notion that large tracts of the *HA* incorporated historical and more strictly literary texts from Greek and Latin authors, had led to a number of studies about literary allusions in the *HA*.¹

The outcome of those studies was the epigrammatic characterization of the author by Sir Ronald Syme as a 'rogue scholar', who delighted in his phantasies. About the roguishness of the author there can be little doubt; it is his learning that interests me for the moment. There is some incongruity, in my opinion, in the notion of the erudite wit, amusing himself in misleading his public, and the undeniable clumsiness of the style of the *HA* and the weakness of the composition of the individual lives and of the collection as a whole. This incongruity has been noticed and expressed by Hohl and Syme, the two scholars who, I think, have contributed most to our understanding of the idiosyncrasies of the author. In his article 'Ueber den Ursprung der Historia Augusta', Hohl (1920, 310) on the one hand concludes 'ein erbärmliches Machwerk ist und bleibt das Lügenbuch der sogenannten Scriptores, und wenn die Sache des Heidentums zu solchen Waffen greifen musste, dann hatte sie den Untergang verdient'. On the other he admits that the author possesses 'eine nicht unverächtliche (*sic!*) grammatisch-rhetorische Bildung' and he gives a list of authors quoted in the *HA*, to which I will return later on. Syme, speaking about the author's performance as a writer in his *Emperors and Biography* remarks (1971, 248): 'He was not an elegant exponent. His normal language is flat and monotonous. But uneven, and significantly so. For this author is erudite, a fancier of words, and a collector.'

In order to establish the range of the author's reading we would need an investigation on the lines of e.g. Hagendahl's studies of the Latin fathers, Jerome and Augustine in particular (Hagendahl 1958; id. 1967; id. 1974) or Ogilvie's book on Lactantius (1978). I should like to make a few preliminary remarks on such an undertaking and make a distinction

¹ E.g. Cameron 1964 (Juvenal); Chastagnol 1970 (Jerome, Ammianus, other fourth century authors); Chastagnol 1972; Chastagnol 1974; Kolb 1972, esp. 17-24; Chastagnol 1976 (Claudian); Chastagnol 1976b (Jerome).

between the four classical school authors and authors who have written after the alleged date of composition in the early fourth century, with particular attention to possible quotations from and allusions to the poet Claudian in the *HA*.

The fourth century school curriculum gives us an idea of what may be expected as common, basic cultural equipment. The studies mentioned above may serve as a basis for comparison with our author to establish the depth and variety of his learning. We may expect an acquaintance with the works of the so-called *Quadriga*² formed by Terence, Cicero, Sallust and Vergil. It would be surprising if we did not find any traces of these authors in the *HA*, as indeed we do. As for Terence, the harvest is decidedly meagre. He is mentioned by name just once (*S* 21.2) along with Homer, Demosthenes, Vergil, Crispus and Plautus, with whom he has in common that he had no children. Of the two quotations noted by Hohl, in *Hel.* 11.2 *erubuit, salva res est* (*Ad.* 643) and *Tac.* 19.5 *dictum sapienti sat est*, the second is really from Plautus (*Pers.* 729) and belongs to the most popular, or, one might say, tritest *loci* from comedy, so that one can easily imagine that the author used it without even being aware that he was quoting Terence or Plautus. In *Car.* 13.5, an interesting passage on the *sermo castrensis*, a quotation from Ter. *Eun.* (426) *lepus tute es: pulpamentum quaeris* is attributed to Livius Andronicus. In a display of pseudo-erudition Plautus and Caecilius are bracketed together. There is room for doubt here. The line is quoted by the grammarian M. Plotius Sacerdos as an example of *κακοέμφοτον* (= *oratio turpem significationem habens inturpibus verbis*, *GL* 6.453.17) and amply discussed by Donatus, so that the author may have come across it in his grammatical studies. Anyhow, it is safe to say on the basis of these few, trivial quotations that there is no evidence of real familiarity with Terence, nor, we may add, with Plautus.

Cicero is present everywhere in the *HA*, especially, as one might expect, in the speeches and the letters with which the author has embellished his work. He is mentioned by name twenty times, but in many more cases phrases or complete sentences are borrowed from Cicero without comment. In this respect the author differs from Ammianus Marcellinus, who likes to show off his knowledge of classical authors, Greek and Roman, and who uses his quotations from Cicero in particular with great effect to underline statements or to highlight events he

² Called the *Quadriga Messii* in Cassiod. *Inst.* 1.15.7 after the grammarian Arusianus Messius, whose phraseological handbook *Exempla elocutionum*, written in 395, is based exclusively on Terence, Cicero, Sallust and Vergil.

regards as particularly significant. From a study of the documents in the *HA* it appears that the author is familiar with the speeches, not with the philosophical treatises or the letters. As for the works on rhetoric, he alludes to *Brutus* 42 in the notorious second chapter of the *vita Aureliani*: *scribe, ut libet ... habiturus mendaciorum comites quos historicae eloquentiae miramur auctores* (cf. Den Hengst 1981, 98). The quotations from the speeches are very unevenly distributed; by far the most are taken from *In Catilinam*, the *Verrinae* and *De domo sua*.³ All in all, it is clear that the author, like Ammianus, knew his Cicero well, but that he was less inclined to parade him as the authority *par excellence* and that his reading seems to be practically restricted to the speeches.

For Sallust we have a useful starting point in the appendix to an article by Klebs (1892), at first sight a mere list of *loci similes*, but looked at more closely, an instructive study, commanding respect if only because it was written before the Thesaurus made research of this kind so much easier. Its weak point is that Klebs offers side by side common expressions like *in dies magis magisque* (*Cat.* 5.7, cf. *Ael.* 6.5) or *haec omnia adversa eidem fuere* (*Cat.* 3.3, cf. *PN* 10.8), that can be found throughout Latin literature, and striking metaphors or antitheses. Expressions of the former type may have been used by the author inadvertently. On the other hand, *quod verbum in pectus Iugurthae altius quam quisquam ratus erat descendit* (*Jug.* 11.7), imitated in *G* 3.4 *quod dictum Severus altius quam quisquam praesentium accepit* and *G* 6.7 *quod dictum altius in pectus Bassiani descendit* is much more likely to be a conscious borrowing. This is even more probable in an oxymoron like *Hist.* 1.55.22 *Fufidius, ancilla turpis, bonorum omnium dehonestamentum*, with which cf. *Cl.* 5.4 *Gallus Antipater, ancilla honorum et historicorum dehonestamentum*. Secondly, Klebs not only compares Sallust and the *HA*, but also mentions other authors, ranging from Velleius to Vegetius, who imitated the same phrases from Sallust. By doing so, he prevents us from drawing hasty conclusions from the correspondence between *G* 3.4. and 6.7 quoted above and e.g. *Heges.* 1.36.25 *quod altius in pectus Herodis quam quisquam ratus erat descendit*. He goes even further, when he denies that *C* 2.7 *neque pepercit vel pudori vel sumptui* is an imitation of *Sal. Cat.* 14.6 *neque sumptui neque modestiae suae parcere*, on the ground that the expression is found for the first time in *Cic. Rab. perd.* 8 *hunc nec suae nec alienae pudicitiae pepercisse*. That observation seems to me

³ *Cat.* and *Ver.* are among the speeches Augustine quotes most often, as can be seen in the lists in Testard 1958. There is only one quotation from *dom.* in Augustine.

misguided, since the combination of financial and moral excess, that the *HA* and Sallust have in common, shows that Sallust is the model. On the whole, Klebs' survey of Sallust serves both as a warning and as an example. It demonstrates the dangers inherent in a mechanical listing of verbal similarities. On the other hand, it shows that it is not enough to point out similarities of expression in two authors, but that all the parallels must be given before we can establish the dependence of a given author from a source.

On Vergil I will make only two small remarks, since the most interesting aspect of the imitation of Vergil, the role of the *sortes Vergilianae*, has been treated by Straub 1991 (cf. De Kisch 1970 and Schwarz 1985 and chapter 13 of this volume). In the first place, the range of quotations from Vergil is far more limited than e.g. in Ammianus, whose text is full of reminiscences from the *Aeneid*. Far greater still is the difference between our author and Jerome and Augustine, whose quotations, collected and discussed by Hagendahl (1958; 1967), cover among them the complete works, including the *Bucolics* and the *Georgics*. In this respect the knowledge of our author is decidedly inferior to that of his contemporaries. It was already noted by Dessau in an article published in 1918 that the *sortes Vergilianae* are taken from a small number of passages mainly in the 'Heldenschau' in book 6. Apart from these *sortes* we find quotations from *Aeneid* 1, 2, 4 and 8.

The second observation concerns what De Kisch has called the 'centonisation' of Vergil, a practice sternly condemned by Jerome in his 53rd Letter as *puerilia et circulatorum ludo similia*, 'childish and like the games played by mountebanks'. In *OM* 12.9:

*egregius forma iuuenis
cui pater haud Mezentius esset*

we see how the author combines two hemistichs from *Aeneid* 6 and 7.⁴ The most daring display of this technique is, as I have pointed out long ago (1981, 52), *PN* 8.6:

*bis denis conscendit navibus aequor
si tamen una ratis transiliet pelagus,*

where Verg. *A.* 1.131 is coupled with a reminiscence from Hor. *C.* 1.2.23-4 and passed off as the translation of a Greek oracle.⁵ All in all, the famil-

⁴ Verg. *A.* 6.861 *egregium forma iuvenem* and 7.654 *cui pater haud Mezentius esset*.

⁵ Could it be have been taken from Servius, who quotes these lines from Horace to illustrate the meaning of *si* in *A.* 1.603?

ilarity of our author with the *Quadriga*, at least as far as he is willing to disclose, is certainly less than in his contemporary Ammianus and far inferior to that of real intellectuals like Jerome and Augustine.

The matter becomes much more complicated when we turn our attention to possible quotations from or allusions to fourth century writers. Here, our author is obliged to play hide and seek with his public, because otherwise he would spoil his own game. This particular problem goes hand in hand with the general tendency of classical authors to conceal their borrowing or, if they admit that they are borrowing, to name the ultimate source of a quotation rather than the source they have in reality consulted. As Courcelle has said about Jerome: 'Il a toujours tendance à taire sa source réelle et à nommer, comme s'il les avait lus, les auteurs qu'il ne connaît qu'à travers un intermédiaire' (Courcelle 1948, 111-2; Hagendahl 1958, 94 n.2).

As a result, we can expect nothing but sabotage from the author himself if we try to ascertain the extent of his reading knowledge of fourth century literature. This provided an incitement to students of the *HA* to look in all possible corners for literature quoted, or rather alluded to, often with the stated intention to find fresh clues for the dating of the enigma. It has struck me many times that, generally speaking, the *Quellenforschung* in the strict sense of the word has proceeded much more cautiously than the research into the author's reading habits in general. Studying the volumes of *Antiquitas Reihe* 4, I am often amazed by the scope of the author's supposed literary culture and I cannot quite escape the impression that I am learning more about the erudition of the scholars writing about the *HA* than about the *HA* itself. This is not a peculiar feature of *HA*-studies. In literary criticism word recurrence is nowadays often taken as a sign of the underlying structure of the work and not everyone pauses to ask if an author uses a word deliberately or simply because it was appropriate or even dictated by the situation described. With computers being used more and more often in studies of this type, a multiplication of strange encounters between literary texts is to be expected. In the *Quellenforschung* proper, e.g. in Barnes' book about the sources of the *HA*, three criteria for determining literary derivation are given (1978, 81): 'Kinship or derivation can be surely demonstrated in three, and only three ways: from concurrence in easily avoidable errors; from close and consistent similarities of linguistic expression; and from distinctive shared characteristics, such as an idiosyncratic selection of facts'. It would be beneficial if we could formulate a similar set of criteria to decide whether or not we accept verbal simi-

larities between the *HA* and a literary text.

For guidance and inspiration we may turn to studies about Claudian, whose own work has justly been called 'un collage de réminiscences' (Schrijvers 1988, 248). The allusions to his literary predecessors that Claudian incorporated into his own poetry have been studied since the seventeenth century by eminent Latinists like Barth and Heinsius. The results of these studies are to be found in the nineteenth century editions of Jeep (1876) and Birt (1892). The differences between these editions are remarkable. Jeep admits fewer verbal similarities between Claudian and earlier poets as imitations than does Birt. The student of the *HA* should, in my opinion, follow Jeep rather than Birt. It is *a priori* likely that Claudian knew Vergil, Lucan and Statius and wanted to show his familiarity with Latin epic. Difference of opinion about the exact number of the imitations does not alter this fact. In the case of imitations by the author of the *HA* of fourth century writers it is *a priori* unlikely that he should spoil his own game. Skepticism is therefore the prescribed attitude.

With this in mind, it seems advisable *not* to accept as conscious imitations

- verbal similarities consisting of single words, even rare ones;
- set phrases of the type *dictum sapienti sat est*, since they have lost their individual character and have become part of the common language;
- parallelisms in the account of historical events or in the sequence of thoughts without corresponding verbal parallelism (although we must be careful here, given the practice of most authors, when imitating, to substitute synonyms or near synonyms for terms found in the source).

On the other hand, positively, we may be assured of literary derivation if a number of verbal correspondences is clustered in one passage. That would be the analogon to the 'consistent similarities' in Barnes' second criterion. That is even more cogent when such a clustering occurs in a passage where the author of the *HA* indulges in phantasy, since in that case the choice of words cannot have been dictated by the narrated historical events.⁶

Once it has been shown beyond reasonable doubt that in one particular case the author of the *HA* has borrowed ideas and words from a fourth century writer other parallels that are not conclusive in themselves may be accepted as imitations. The next step would be to classify

⁶ As I have tried to show in the case of Ammianus (31.7 ≈ A 10-11), Den Hengst 1987, 170-4.

these verbal similarities in order to arrive at something resembling the 'Imitationskommentar' Ursula Keudel (1970) has written on Claudian's *De consulatu Stilichonis*, in which she distinguishes between, as she calls it 'absichtslose Verwendung eines Vorbildes', 'Verwendung eines Vorbildes mit bestimmter, interpretierender Absicht' and 'umformende, schöpferische Verwendung eines Vorbildes'.

I would like to put these considerations to the test in the case of Claudian. Chastagnol, in an article in *Historia* 1970 and later in a study of the *vita Cari, Carini* and *Numeriani* ch. 19, has listed some twenty-five passages in which he detected traces of Claudian. Not all of these stand the test. In some cases, the verbal similarities are not close enough to be really convincing, in others we are confronted with *topoi* that are too traditional to be of real value and in one case it is possible that our author took his cue directly from Vergil.⁷ I single out one passage that I consider Chastagnol's strongest parallel, viz. *Car.* 19 ≈ *Claud. Cons. Manl. Theod.* 311-33 (Chastagnol 1970, 460-1; id. 1976, 75-80). The *nova spectacula* described in *Car.* 19, of which the author pretends to have seen scenes on a picture cannot simply be accepted as historical fact (cf. Alföldy 1966). In Claudian's panegyric it is a description of the games the poet expects the new consul to give. There is a parallelism in the descriptions of the musicians, clowns and acrobats (*Car.* 19.2 *neurobat-en, qui velut in ventis cothurnatus ferretur* ≈ *Claud. Cons. Manl. Theod.* 320 *vel qui more avium sese ferrentur in auras*). Even more striking are the verbal similarities in the description of the burning scaffold (*Car.* 19.2 *pegma praeterea, cuius flammis scaena coflagravit* ≈ *ibid.* 325-7 *mobile ponderibus descendat pegma reductis / inque chori speciem spargentes ardua flammis / scaena rotet*).

Here we find a clustering of verbal similarities, in which rare words like *pegma* occur, in a passage that was in all probability invented by the author himself. Even leaving aside the topicality of the *ludus Sarmaticus* mentioned in the same context (*Car.* 19.3), detected by Alföldy, I think that this accumulation of verbal similarities in a probably fictitious passage justifies Chastagnol's claim that this 'révèle clairement le démarquage'.

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⁷ For AS 41.1 *matronas... regias contentas esse debere uno reticulo atque inauribus et bacato monili et corona* cf. Verg. A. 1.655-6 *monile / bacatum et duplicem gemmis auroque coronam* rather than Claud. *Nupt.* 166-8 *Cingula Cymothoe, rarum Galatea monile / et gravibus Spatale bacis diadema ferebat / intextum, rubro quas legerat ipsa profundo*.

CHAPTER TEN

DIE POESIE IN DER *HISTORIA AUGUSTA*

Bemerkungen zur Opiliusvita

Von den vielen Eigentümlichkeiten der *Historia Augusta* sind die angeblich aus dem griechischen übersetzten Verse vielleicht das befremdlichste. So erlaubt sich der Autor z.B. in *PN* 8,6 die unerhörte Frechheit ein elegisches Distichon, das aus zwei Reminiszenzen aus Vergils *Aeneis*, bzw. den Oden des Horaz zusammengeschrieben ist, dem Leser auszugeben als Übersetzung eines delphischen Orakels.¹ Älteren Kommentatoren wie Casaubonus und Salmasius sind die Vergilzitate in der *HA* selbstverständlich nicht entgangen und es ist eigentlich erstaunlich dass der radikale Zweifel in bezug auf die Zuverlässigkeit der in einer solchen Vita gebotenen Information solange auf sich hat warten lassen. Denn unmittelbar nach dem Schwindelzitat in *PN* 8,6 verfolgt der Autor mit einer Dedikation an Diokletian: *haec sunt, Diocletiane maxime Augustorum, quae de Pescennio didicimus ex pluribus libris*. Im nachhinein betrachtet könnte man sagen dass der Autor hier seine Karten fast offen auf den Tisch gelegt hat. Aber im nachhinein scheint vieles einfach.

Die angeblichen Übersetzungen aus dem griechischen in der *HA* sind nur selten untersucht worden. Dessau (1889) hat in seinem grundlegenden Artikel „Über Zeit und Persönlichkeit der Scriptores Historiae Augustae“ an Hand der Vergilreminiszenzen erwiesen dass es überhaupt keine Übersetzungen sind. Baldwin (1978) hat dieses Ergebnis weiter erhärtet, ohne jedoch viel Eigenes hinzuzufügen. Cazzaniga (1972) hat als einziger diese Gedichte untersucht, ohne, wie er selbst zugibt, sich in die Eigenart des *HA* vertieft zu haben. Wir werden sehen wozu das führen kann. Die meisten dieser „Übersetzungen“ finden sich bekanntlich in der *Opiliusvita* (*OM*). Fangen wir also an mit der poetischen Diskussion zwischen Macrinus und seine Kritiker in dieser Vita an, *OM* 11,4:

¹ *PN* 8,6: *bis denis Italum conscendit navibus aequor / si tamen una ratis transiliet pelagus*, Cf. Verg. *A* 1,381: *bis denis Phrygium conscendi navibus aequor* und Hor. *Carm.* 1,3,13-4: *si tamen impiae / non tangenda rates transiliunt vada*. Cf. pp. 167-8 of this book.

*histrio iam senior turpis, gravis, asper, iniquus,
 impius et felix sic simul esse cupit,
 ut nolit pius esse, velit tamen esse beatus,
 quod natura negat nec recipit ratio.
 nam pius et felix poterat dicique viderique:
 impius, infelix est, erit ille sibi.*
*hos versus nescio qui de Latinis iuxta eos, qui Graeci erant propositi, in foro
 posuit. quibus acceptis Macrinus his versibus respondisse fertur:*
*si talem Graium tetulissent fata poetam
 qualis Latinus gabalus iste fuit
 nil populus nosset, nil nosset curia, mango
 nullus scripsisset carmina taetra mihi.*

Die ersten vier Zeilen sind leicht verständlich. Sie sind nichts mehr als die Bearbeitung der historisch falschen Nachricht im vorgehenden Paragraphen 11,2, dass Macrinus den ihm vom Senat gebotenen Ehrennamen *Felix* akzeptiert, den Titel *Pius* jedoch abgelehnt hätte, weil er lieber als unerbittlich streng gelten möchte. Zu Grunde liegt der triviale Gedanke dass nur ein sittlich hochstehender Mensch wirklich glücklich sein kann. Was die Einzelheiten betrifft, *histrio* ist im allgemeinen Sinne als Schimpfwort zu nehmen. Die Häufung von Adjektiven findet man öfters in der HA, z.B. in Gd. 5,3 *virum nobilem, magnanimum, disertum, iustum, continentem, bonum*. Die vierte Zeile enthält eine Reminiszenz an Juvenals *si natura negat, facit indignatio versus* (1,79). Schwieriger sind die letzten Zeilen. Pasoli hat in seiner Ausgabe der *vita* die handschriftliche Lesung *poterit* verteidigt. Das würde aber m.E. eine positive Erwartung ausdrücken, die zu dem feindlichen Sinn des Gedichtes gar nicht stimmt. Vers 5 bezieht sich auf die Anerbietung der Ehrentitel durch den Senat, während Vers 6 die gegenwärtige und zukünftige Lage andeutet, indem er als Mörder des vorigen, bzw. Opfer des folgenden Kaisers *impius* und *infelix* genannt wird. Sachlich stimmt dies überein mit Ausonius' Epigramm auf Macrinus, wo es heisst: *quae patitur meruit* (Caes. 95).

Kuriositätshalber und *in Parenthesi* führe ich ein Gedicht an aus den *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, einer 1950 entdeckte Sammlung vom Ende des 4. Jahrhunderts, die vielleicht eine Übersetzung aus dem griechischen ist und in dem der Name *Felix* allen Grammatikern entsagt wird, *Ep. Bob. 61*:

*Felix grammaticus non est, sed nec fuit umquam
nec quisquam est felix nomine grammaticus.
sed si quis felix praeter fatum extitit et fas
is demum excessit grammaticos canonas.*

Cf. AP 11,279:

Οὐδεὶς γραμματικῶν δύναται ποτε < ὄλβιος > εἶναι
ὀργὴν καὶ μῆνιν καὶ χόλον εὐθὺς ἔχων.

Die Koinzidenz ist um so erstaunlicher wenn wir uns vergegenwärtigen dass auch Macrinus sich laut der Vita 4,3 in Africa als *grammaticus* betätigt hat.

Interessanter aber scheint mir die Antwort Macrins. Sein Gedicht enthält zwei grobe Verstösse gegen die Prosodie in *Latinus* und *gabalus* mit langer Anfangssilbe, was besonders bei ein so übliches Wort als *Latinus* befremdend ist. Das wird wohl der Grund sein weshalb der Autor die Verse selbst *longe peiores quam illi Latini* nennt. Auffallend ist weiter das archaische *tetulissent*, das übrigens auch in dem Gedicht AS 38,4 begegnet.³ Ich muss gestehen dass ich die ersten zwei Verse nie richtig verstanden habe, bis ich bei Cazzaniga den Verweis auf Vergil fand, E. 5,34: *tu decus omne tuis. postquam te fata tulere eqs. Ferre* in der Bedeutung *auferre* „wegnehmen“ ergibt in der Tat einen viel besseren Sinn als *ferre* „hervorbringen“. Die Paraphrase lautet dann: „hätte das Schicksal den griechischen Dichterling weggenommen, der genau so schlecht war wie dieser lateinische Galgenvogel, so hätte das Volk nichts gewusst“ usw. Man braucht keineswegs, wie Cazzaniga vorschlägt, *si* die Bedeutung von *utinam* zu geben um einen richtigen Sinn zu bekommen, und noch viel weniger möchte ich ihm folgen in der Konjektur *mutinus* „Schlappschwanz“, die er an Stelle des metrisch anstössigen *Latinus* lesen möchte, denn der Gegensatz *Graius* – *Latinus* soll m.E. jedenfalls erhalten bleiben. Man kann sich natürlich fragen ob das archaische Wort *gabalus* in so unmittelbarer Nähe der folgenden Vita des Heliogabalus, der in AS 1,2 auch kurz als *Gabalus* angedeutet wird, nicht eine Anspielung auf diesen Kaiser enthält. Das ist an und für sich ganz plausibel; nur muss ich gestehen dass mir der Sinn einer solchen Allusion in dem Kontext dieses Gedichts nicht deutlich wäre. Zuletzt möchte ich mich beschäftigen mit dem Gedicht OM 14,2:

² Die Lesart ὄλβιος ist übrigens umstritten. In seiner Budé-Ausgabe aus 1972 schlägt Aubreton vor ἥπιος zu lesen, was allerdings als Kontrast besser zu ὀργή, μῆνις und χόλος stimmt.

³ AS 38,4 *pulchrum quod vides esse nostrum regem, quem Syrum tetulit propago, venatus facit et lepus comesus, de quo continuum capit leporem.*

*vidimus in somnis, cives, nisi fallor, et istud:
 Antoninorum nomen puer ille gerebat,
 qui patre venali genitus, sed matre pudica,
 centum nam moechos passa est centumque rogavit.
 ipse etiam calvus moechus fuit, inde maritus:
 en Pius, en Marcus, Verus nam non fuit ille.*

Der Anfang ist dem unmittelbar vorangehenden Paragraphen entnommen, wo es von Diadumenus heisst *quod in somnis Antoninus fuisset*, dass er es nur geträumt hatte, aber kein wirklicher Antoninus gewesen war. Dieser Traum wird jetzt einigermaßen gewaltsam auf die ganze Bürgerschaft übertragen. Diese Beobachtung an sich genügt um der Versicherung dass auch dieses Gedicht eine Übersetzung aus dem griechischen sei keinen Glauben zu schenken. Dies wird bestätigt durch Vers 5, eine unübersehbare Anspielung auf die Spottverse die die Soldaten während des Triumphzuges des Cäsar auf ihn sangen, wie Sueton uns berichtet hat.⁴ Diese Entlehnung hat schon Salmasius in seinem Kommentar notiert. Das literarische Versteckspiel unseres Autors ist aber, wie ich meine, noch ein wenig raffinierter, denn die vierte Zeile scheint mir Catulls elftem Gedicht entnommen zu sein, wo es von Lesbia heisst: *cum suis vivat valeatque moechis / quos simul complexa tenet trecentos*. Wie haben hier also, wie in PN 8,6, ein aus Fragmenten verschiedener lateinischen Autoren zusammengeschriebenes Machwerk, das als Übersetzung aus dem griechischen aufgeführt wird. Ich kann deshalb Cazzaniga's Versuch das angeblich unterliegende griechische Original zu rekonstruieren, wie ingeniös er es auch gemacht hat, nur als verlorene Mühe betrachten, womit nicht gesagt sein will dass sein Artikel keine nützliche Beobachtungen enthält. Der dritte Vers bereitet Schwierigkeiten. Dass der Vater Macrinus *venalis* und nachher *moechus* genannt wird, ist eine Bearbeitung der Charakteristik des Aurelius Victor, *cui Pinio cognomen erat* in Kapitel 4,2: *Macrinum libertinum, hominem prostibilem*. Dass aber die Mutter, von der wir in einem Brief lesen dass sie Iuno besonders ehrt (*Dd. 7,7 di faxint et bona Iuno, quam colis*), hier unkeusch genannt wird, ist nicht im Einklang mit sonstigen Mitteilungen in den Macrinus- und Diadumenusviten und die Bemerkung würde besser passen zu der Charakteristik der Mütter des Commodus und des Heliogabalus. Die Verbindung *sed* könnte als Sarkasmus verteidigt werden, Salmasius' Vorschlag hier *nec* zu lesen finde

⁴ Suet. Jul. 51: *urbani, servate uxores, calvum moechum adducimus*.

ich aber attraktiv. In Bezug auf Vers 5 hat Cazzaniga ganz richtig darauf hingewiesen dass *calvus* auch eine Anspielung auf den Freigelassenenstatus des Macrinus enthält, was er mit Parallelstellen aus Plautus und Livius belegt. Macrinus war somit noch als Freigelassener (*etiam calvus*) der Liebhaber der Mutter, und wurde erst später ihr Gatte. Der letzte Vers passt zu den Aufzählungen der Antonine die wohl den Hauptinhalt der Macrinus- und Diadumenusviten bilden. Die Pointe liegt im Wort *Verus*, das als Adjektiv und Eigennahme verstanden werden muss und zugleich eine Bearbeitung und eine Bestätigung ist von OM 10,6: *quod Antoninorum nomini est velut nothus adpositus*. Weiter kann man nur bedauern dass das in Jamben geschriebene *Responsum Macrini* bei dessen Ermordung verloren gegangen ist, *iucundissimi autem fuisse dicuntur*. Wir sollen glauben dass der Kaiser mit Jamben besser zuwege kam als mit Hexametern.

Jetzt möchte ich der Frage nachgehen nach dem literarischen Umfeld solcher Verse, ob es Vorbilder oder Parallelerscheinungen dazu gibt und wenn ja, bei welchen Autoren und zuletzt wie es bestellt ist um die Distribution dieser angeblichen Übersetzungen über den Viten in der *Historia Augusta*.

Fangen wir an mit Sueton, dem bewunderten Vorbild des Autors. In den *Vitae Caesarum* finden sich eine grosse Anzahl poetischer Zitate und nicht weniger als siebzehn darunter sind griechisch. Ich habe sie mit einem Asterisk markiert.⁵ In der HA gibt es, nebenbei bemerkt, nur ein einziges griechisches Zitat, nämlich AS 18,5: ὁ πολλὰ κλέψας ὀλίγα δοῦς ἐκφεύζεται, das der Autor selbst erläuternd (und nicht ganz richtig) übersetzt mit *qui multa rapuerit, pauca suffragatoribus dederit, salvus erit*. In Sueton werden die griechischen Zitate in der Regel nicht übersetzt. Eine scheinbare Ausnahme bildet *Jul.* 30,5.⁶ Sueton erzählt dort dass Cäsars Wahlspruch ein Zitat aus Euripides' *Phoenissae* war, das er lateinisch übersetzt mit *nam si violandum est ius, regnandi grátia*

⁵ Suet. *Jul.* 20,2, *30,5, 49,1, 51, 80,2, 84,2; *Aug.* 7,2, 25,4, 40,5, 53,1, *65,4, 68, 70,1, *98,4, *99,1; *Tib.* *21,5, 59,1; *Cal.* 6,2, 8,1, *22,4, 30,1; *Cl.* *1,1, *42,1; *Nero* *38,1, *39,1, *46,3, 47,12, *49,3; *Gal.* 6,2, 13; *Otho* 3,2, *7,2; *V* *23,1; *Dom.* 9,1, *12,3, *14,2, *23,2.

⁶ Suet. *Jul.* 30,5 *quod existimasse videbatur et Cicero scribens de Officiis tertio libro semper Caesarem in ore habuisse [est in Phoenissis: εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδίκειν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι κάλλιστον ἀδίκημα: τα δ' ἄλλα εὐσεβεῖν χρεών.] Euripidis versus, quos sic ipse convertit: nam si violandum est ius, regnandi grátia uiolandum est: aliis rebus pietatem colas. Cic. Off. 3,82: ipse autem socer (i.e. Caesar) in ore semper Graecos versus habebat, quos dicam, ut potero, incondite fortasse, sed tamen ut res possit intellegi e.q.s..*

/ *violandum est: aliis rébus pietatém colas*. Die Nachricht ist übernommen aus Cicero *Off.* 3,82, der die lateinischen Trimeter nachdrücklich als seine eigene Arbeit präsentiert, für die er sich sogar entschuldigt mit den Worten *incondite fortasse, sed tamen ut res possit intellegi*. Dies ist die einzige Parallele die ich bisher gefunden habe für ein ins lateinische übersetztes Zitat, wobei der Autor eine kritische Bemerkung zu der eigenen Arbeit macht. Weil dem Autor der *HA* kein Schriftsteller gelaufiger was als eben Cicero, könnte ihn diese Stelle auf den Gedanken gebracht haben eigene aus dem griechischen stammende Verse in lateinischer Übersetzung mit kritischem Kommentar zu versehen, sowie er das z.B. *Dd.* 7,4 macht: *hi versus a Graeco nescio quo compositi a malo poeta in Latinum translati sunt*.

Sucht man in der Poesie weitere Parallelen zu Übertragungen aus dem griechischen, dann bietet die *Anthologia Latina* eine ganze Menge Vorbilder aus späterer Zeit, meistens aus dem 5. und frühen 6. Jahrhundert. Beispielsweise zitiere ich ein m.E. sehr gelungene Übersetzung eines Gedichtes, das in der *Anthologia Palatina* auf Nahmen des Kaisers Hadrian oder auch des Germanicus überliefert ist, *AL* 708:

*Martia progenies, Hector, tellure sub ima
Fas audire tamen si mea verba tibi:
Respira, quoniam vindex tibi contigit heres,
qui patriae famam proferat usque tuae.
Ilios en surgit rursum; inclita gens colit illam
te Marte inferior, Martis amica tamen.
Myrmidonas periisse omnes dic Hector Achilli,
Thessaliam et magnis esse sub Aeneadis.*

AP 9.387:

(*Ἀδριανοῦ Καίσαρος, οἱ δὲ Γερμανικοῦ*)

Ἔκτορ, Ἀρήιον αἶμα, κατὰ χθονὸς εἴ που ἀκούεις,
χαῖρε καὶ ἄμπνευσον βαιὸν ὑπὲρ πατρίδος.

Ἵλιον οἰκεῖται κλεινὴ πόλις ἄνδρας ἔχουσα
σοῦ μὲν ἀφαυροτέρους, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἀρηιφίλους·

Μυρμιδόνες δ' ἀπόλοντο. παρίστασο καὶ λέγ' Ἀχιλλεῖ
θεσσαλίην κεῖσθαι πᾶσαν ὑπὲρ Αἰνεάδαις.

Die lateinische Übersetzung ist metrisch ganz korrekt. Es ist dem Übersetzer zwar nicht gelungen den Inhalt des griechischen Sechszeilers auch seinerseits in sechs Versen verbal auszudrücken, dafür hat er aber

mit den Worten *quoniam vindex tibi contigit heres* das griechische ἄμπνευσον βαίὼν ὑπὲρ πατρίδος sinngemäss expliziert. Füllwörter gibt es kaum; nur *tamen*, Vers 2, gehört in dieser Kategorie. *Magnis* in Zeile 8 ist gar nicht schlechter als das πῶσάν des Originals. Kurz, die Qualität dieser Übersetzung ist viel höher als die der vergleichbaren Erzeugnisse in der *HA*.

Kontemporäre Gedichte dieser Art finden sich, wie gesagt, auch unter den *Epigrammata Bobiensia*. Aber wir brauchen nicht nur in abstrusen Sammlungen nach Parallelen Umschau zu halten. Unter den Epigrammen des Ausonius gibt es so viele Übersetzungen aus dem griechischen dass Benedetti (1980) diesem Aspekt seines Schaffens ein ganzes Buch widmen konnte. Das ist deshalb besonders interessant, weil Ausonius in der *HA*-Forschung eine prominente Stellung hat. Man hat sich namentlich aus seinen *Caesares* einen Eindruck zu gewinnen versucht von der Eigenart und dem Umfang der in der *HA* vielfach zitierten Biographiensammlung des Marius Maximus. Trotz des berechtigten Einspruchs den Green (1991) gegen die Gleichsetzung des Inhalts der *Caesares* mit dem der Biographien des Marius Maximus erhoben hat, glaube ich dass Ausonius für das Verständnis des geistigen Klimas in dem der Autor der *HA* arbeitete wichtig ist. Zuerst verarbeitet Ausonius in allem was er schreibt Vergilfragmente, die er oft in einem abgeänderten Zusammenhang und in sonderbaren Kombinationen verwendet. Er macht das wohlüberlegen und kunstvoll in seiner *Mosella*, bisweilen tut er es auch spielerisch wie in seiner *Cento nuptialis*, in der er mit Hilfe tadelloser Halbverse aus der *Aeneis* ein frivoles Gedicht schreibt von dem ich den noch halbwegs dezenten Anfang anführe:

Cento nuptialis 8

*Postquam congressi sola sub nocte per umbram
et montem Venus ipsa dedit, nova proelia temptant.
tollit se arrectum: conantem plurima frustra
occupat os faciemque, pedem pede fervidus urget etc.*

Die Art und Weise in dem Ausonius hier vorgeht, unterscheidet sich nicht wesentlich von dem was sich der Autor der *HA* erlaubt, wenn er z.B. in OM 12,9 einen Halbvers Vergils über Marcellus und einen Halbvers über Lausus miteinander zu einer Akklamation Diadumenus zu Ehren verbindet: *egregius forma iuvenis / cui pater haud Mezentius esset*.

Die Parellelen zwischen Ausonius und der *HA* sind nicht auf die ge-

meinsame Anwendung von Vergilzitaten beschränkt. Barnes hat eine Anzahl Stellen zusammengebracht, in denen Ausonius' *Caesares* und die *HA* Übereinstimmungen aufweisen, die mehr sachlich als wörtlich sind. Baldwin (1981) hat auf die Parallele zwischen Ausonius' Epigramm 38 und *H* 20,8 hingewiesen, die m.E. aber als Wanderanekdote betrachtet werden soll. Die interessanteste Parallele zwischen den *Caesares* und der *HA* ist m.E. das Epigramm auf Mark Aurel, das sachlich identisch ist nicht sowohl mit der Hauptvita als Ganzem, sondern mit der Einlage *MA* 18,4-20:

Auson. *Caes.* 17

*Post Marco tutela datur, qui scita Platonis
flexit ad imperium patre Pio melior.
successore suo moriens, set principe pravo
hoc solo patriae, quod genuit, nocuit.*⁷

Ich glaube dass das Ausonius-dossier noch um zwei Stellen erweitert werden kann. In *OM* 14,2 wird der junge Diadumenianus verspottet, weil er zu Unrecht das *nomen Antoninorum* führte: *Antoninorum nomen puer ille gerebat*. Auch dieses Kurzgedicht soll aus dem griechischen übertragen sein *ab aliquo poeta vulgari*. Bei Ausonius gibt es, abgesehen vom bekannten Epigramm auf Heliogabalus mit den Worten *Antoninorum nomina falsa gerens* noch ein Epigramm, abwechselnd griechisch und lateinisch geschrieben, über zwei Männer die *Chrèstos* und *Akindunos* heißen, aber *Achrèstos* und *Kindunos* genannt werden sollten, Auson. *Epigr.* 58:

χρηστὸς, ἀκίνδυνος, αὐτοαδέλφῃ οἰκτρὰ δὲ τέκνα
moribus ambo malis nomina falsa gerunt
οὐδ' οὗτος χρηστὸς κτλ.

Wir lesen dort *moribus ambo malis nomina falsa gerunt*. Die sachliche Übereinstimmung scheint mir frappant, die Phrase *nomen gerere* aber zu üblich um mit Bestimmtheit von Nachahmung sprechen zu dürfen.

⁷ Cf. z.B. *MA* 19,12: *deusque etiam nunc habetur, ut vobis ipsis, sacratissime imperator Diocletiane, et semper visum est et videtur, qui eum inter numina vestra non ut ceteros sed specialiter veneramini ac saepe dicitis vos vita et clementia tales esse cupere, qualis fuit Marcus, etiamsi philosophia nec Plato esse possit, si revertatur in vitam* und 18,4: *hic sane vir tantus et talis ac diis vita et morte coniunctus filium Commodum dereliquit; qui si felix fuisset, filium non reliquisset*.

Weniger skeptisch bin ich im Falle der folgenden Texte, *HA T 31.9: errorem meum memor historiae diligentia tuae eruditionis avertit* ≈ Auson. *Tetrast. Caesares 1-2: incipiam a divo percurramque ordine cunctos / novi Romanae quos memor historiae*. Die Stelle in der *HA T 31.9*, gehört zu denjenigen in denen der Autor sich am meisten dekuviert. Er hatte, so schreibt er, versehentlich zwei weibliche Tyrannen aufgeführt um die gewünschte Zahl von dreissig Tyrannen zu erreichen. Dann aber wies ihn sein anonymen Gönner, nachdem dieser das Buch schon empfangen hatte, darauf hin dass er sich damit lächerlich machen würde bei seinen Kollegen im Tempel der Pax. Hierfür dankt ihm der Autor mit der blumenreichen Phrase *errorem meum memor historiae diligentia tuae eruditionis avertit*. Die gleiche Verbindung *memor historiae* findet sich in dem Tetrastichon womit Ausonius die Reihe seiner Cäsares eröffnet. Dort kündigt Auson an, dass er alle Caesares behandeln wird *novi Romanae quos memor historiae*. Und in diesen, wie ich glaube, Schlüsselstellen, finden wir nicht eine ganz übliche Phrase wie *nomen gerere*, sondern eine Verbindung, *memor historiae*, wofür der Thesaurus keine einzige Parallele bietet.

Ich halte die Übereinstimmungen zwischen Ausonius und der Autor der *HA* deshalb für wichtig, weil ich auf Grund von Erwägungen kompositorischer Art vermute, dass der Autor mit Biographien von tyranni angefangen, oder wenigstens eine separate Sammlung solcher Viten geschrieben hat, genauso wie Ausonius laut einer Mitteilung von Iohannes de Matociis eine Reihe von Epigrammen verfasst hat über diejenigen Kaiser die mit Waffengewalt die Macht errungen hatten *a Deciis usque ad Diocletianum*.⁸ Soweit über den literarischen Kontext der angeblichen Übersetzungen in der *HA*.

Zuletzt möchte ich die Distribution dieser Verse über die *HA* betrachten. Wie wir gesehen haben, tauchen sie zuerst auf in den Pescennius- und Albinusviten, erreichen die höchste Frequenz in den Opilius- und Diadumenusviten und klingen dann aus in der Alexandervita. Die letzten Beispiele sind *AS 14,4* und *T 11,5*. In *AS 14,4* bekommt der junge Alexander von einem *vates* zu hören: *te manet imperium caeli terraeque* und *te manet imperium, quod tenet imperium*, wozu der Autor bemerkt *et haec quidem de Graecis versibus sunt prodita*. Eine würdige Abschlies-

⁸ Für diesen Veronesischen Schriftsteller aus dem 14. Jahrhundert siehe Green 1991, 228 n. 24. In einem Verzeichnis der Werke des Ausonius nennt er ein Gedicht *de imperatoribus res novas molitis a Decio usque ad Diocletianum versu iambico trimetro iuxta libros Eusebii Nannetici ystorici*.

sung dieser Sammlung bildet das Gedicht *T* 11,5 mit der zusätzlichen Bemerkung des Autors *hos ego versus a quodam grammatico translato, ita posui ut fidem servarem, non quo non melius potuerint transferri sed ut fidelitas historica servaretur quam ego prae ceteris custodiendam putavi, qui quod ad eloquentiam pertinet nihil curo*.

Wenn ich endlich versuche dies zu kombinieren mit den Übereinstimmungen mit der Poesie des Ausonius und den Vermutungen die ich früher vorgebracht habe über die Genese des Werkes,⁹ komme ich zu dem folgenden Ergebnis, dessen spekulativen Charakter ich mir nicht verhehle, das aber auf Beobachtungen am Text beruht. Der Autor hat, dazu veranlasst durch die Vielheit der Kaiser während der Krise um 250, möglicherweise auf Antrieb des Ausonius, eine gesonderte Sammlung von Tyrannenviten verfasst, genauso wie Ausonius das in poetischer Form gemacht hat laut der erwähnten Mitteilung des Iohannes de Matociis. Das Vorwort der Macrinusvita, die zu dieser Kategorie gehört, kann als Einleitung der ganzen Sammlung angesehen werden. Falls die *Caesares* des Ausonius und dessen Übersetzungen aus dem griechischen, wie ich vermute, dem Autor als Vorbild gegolten haben, ist es gar nicht verwunderlich dass dieser Einfluss eben in den ersten Biographien der Reihe *PN*, *CLA*, *OM* und *Dd.* am deutlichsten spürbar geblieben ist.¹⁰

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⁹ Den Hengst 1995 ('Selbstkommentare', chapter 11 of this book).

¹⁰ See now Nisbet 2003 for bilingual verses in the imperial period (note eds.)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SELBSTKOMMENTARE IN DER *HISTORIA AUGUSTA*

Wer die *Historia Augusta* von Anfang bis Ende liest und dabei versucht, die Kommentare des Autors zur eigenen Arbeitsweise in Form von Querverweisen, Ich-Aussagen und programmatischen Mitteilungen miteinander und mit den handschriftlichen Verfasseramen in Einklang zu bringen, der gerät in unüberwindliche Schwierigkeiten. Wer andererseits die *Historia Augusta* liest als das Werk eines einzelnen Autors, der sich hinter der Maske von sechs verschiedenen *scriptores* versteckt, kommt ebenfalls in grosse Probleme. Denn was sich der postulierte Autor erlaubt, ist so unerhört, und das Werk teilweise so heterogen, dass man in Versuchung gerät, an verschiedene Hände zu denken.

Diese Uneinheitlichkeit ist gerade von den Forschern, die am kräftigsten für einheitliche Autorschaft eingetreten sind – ich denke in erster Linie an Dessau und Syme – nie verhehlt worden. Die Erklärungen dieser beiden Koryphäen für die wesentliche Einheit in der scheinbaren Verschiedenheit möchte ich zum Ausgangspunkt einer Untersuchung nach den Selbstkommentaren in dieser Sammlung nehmen. Bekanntlich erklärte Dessau Unterschiede in Stil und Arbeitsweise des Autors dadurch, dass sich dieser weitgehend von seinem Quellenmaterial bestimmen liess und die Schreibweise änderte „je nachdem lateinische Quellen abgeschrieben oder griechische übersetzt sind, oder endlich eigene Arbeit des Autors vorliegt“ (1892, 602). Syme interpretierte sie als Zeichen für eine Art Reifeprozess, in dessen Verlauf der Autor mehr und mehr sein wahres Gesicht zeigte, bis er in den Viten des angeblichen Vopiscus seine „mature manner“ zur Schau stellte.¹ Beide Erklärungen, das sei gleich gesagt, lösen neue Fragen aus. Inwieweit kann man einen Abschreiber oder Übersetzer als Autor bezeichnen, oder besser gesagt, wieviel muss dieser von sich selbst hinzufügen, um den Namen mit Recht tragen zu dürfen? Und wie verträgt sich auf der anderen Seite der Gedanke an eine sich allmählig im Stil offenbarende Entwicklung mit der Hast und Schlamperei, die auch Syme zufolge kennzeichnend für die Sammlung sind?

¹ Syme 1971, besonders die Kap. 4 („The Secondary Vitae“) und 16 („Literary Talent“).

Ich beginne mit den Viten von Hadrian bis Macrinus, in denen die Lage wohl am verworrensten und die Empfindung der Uneinheitlichkeit am stärksten ist. Ich möchte dabei erstens nachgehen, wie die kommentierenden Bemerkungen über diese erste Vitenreihe verteilt sind. Zweitens frage ich, ob diese Bemerkungen des Autors vielleicht Einblick in die Reihenfolge bieten, in der die Viten verfasst worden sind. Bevor ich mich aber den Kommentaren zuwende, noch eine Bemerkung. Die aleatorischen Zuweisungen der *vitae* an die ersten vier *scriptores* in den Handschriften lasse ich ausser Betracht, ebenso wie die Dedikationen an Diokletian und Konstantin, die unmöglich ernst genommen werden können.

Die erste Vita, in der wir Selbstkommentare antreffen, ist die *vita Aelii*. Im Prolog und im Epilog gibt der Autor seinen Vorsatz bekannt nicht nur über *Augusti*, wie er das bis auf Hadrian getan hatte, sondern über jeden einzelnen Caesar ein Buch zu schreiben. Zweimal wird auf die *vita Hadriani* zurückverwiesen.² Der zweite Rückbezug ist von besonderem Interesse, einmal, weil sich der Autor dort selbst zu korrigieren scheint, zweitens, weil er in der *vita Alexandri* diese Berichtigung wieder vergessen zu haben scheint. Ich werde noch darauf zurückkommen. Die Vita enthält auch einen Vorgriff auf die *vita Veri* für detailliertere Angaben über die Familie des Prinzen.³

Die *vita Antonini* enthält überhaupt keinen, die *vita Marci* nur einen Selbstkommentar.⁴ Die Stelle findet sich in „a notoriously bad passage“, wie Syme sagte, einem Passus also, der augenscheinlich eine spätere Addition oder Interpolation ist. Weil wir in der Folge auf mehr derartige Passagen stossen werden, hat es seinen Sinn, hier die äusseren Merkmale einer solchen, sagen wir neutral, Addition oder Einlage aufzulisten. Sie folgt auf die Beschreibung des Todes und der Konsekration des Kaisers, kommt also nach dem natürlichen Ende der Vita (18,1-3). Der Autor leitet sie ein mit einem wiederholten *sane* auf dessen Anwendung

² Ael. 3,1 *adoptatus autem Aelius Verus ab Hadriano eo tempore, quo iam, ut superius diximus* (= H 23,1), *parum vigeat* und 5,4-5 *nam tetrafarmacum, seu potius pentefarmacum, quo postea semper Hadrianus est usus, ipse dicitur repperisse ... de quo genere cibi aliter refert Marius Maximus, non pentefarmacum, sed tetrafarmacum appellans, ut et nos ipsi in eius vita persecuti sumus.*

³ Ael. 2,9-10 *et de huius quidem familia plenius in vita Lucii Aurelii Ceionii Commodi Veri Antonini, filii huiusce, quem sibi adoptare Antoninus iussus est, disseremus. is enim liber debet omnia... continere, qui habet principem, de qua plura dicenda sunt.*

⁴ MA 19,5-6 *Commodum... qui mille prope pugnas publice populo inspectante gladiatorias imperator exhibuit, ut in vita eius docebitur.*

als Übergangspartikel zu neuen thematischen Abschnitten Mouchová (1975, 77-80) hingewiesen hat. Er fährt fort mit einem Irrealis der Vergangenheit *si felix fuisset, filium non reliquisset*, der inhaltlich dem Passus *vita Severi* 20 verwandt ist, auf den ich noch zurückkommen werde, und der, wie Alföldy (1966, 9 und Anm. 39) nachgewiesen hat, der Form nach für die *HA* charakteristisch ist. Weiterhin fällt die Transposition eines Apophthegmas auf, das Dio (62,13,2) über Nero erzählt hat, hier aber dem Marcus in den Mund gelegt wird: *si uxorem dimittimus, reddamus et dotem* (19,8). Der Passus zeigt eine Häufung meist elementarer rhetorischer *figurae* wie Alliteration (*vir tantus ac talis* 18,4), Anapher (*omnis aetas, omnis sexus, omnis conditio ac dignitas* 18,5), Steigerung (*nullus lanista, nullus scaenicus, nullus arenarius, nullus postremo ex omnium dedecorum ac scelerum conluvione concretus* 19,6), Asyndeton (*boni principis vita, sanctitas, tranquillitas, pietas* 19,10) und Chiasmus (*gladiator filius, uxor infamis* 19,11). Endlich wird in 19,12 Diokletian angerufen, und das Ganze wird durch den Satz *et haec quidem breviter et congeste* als Einlage charakterisiert.

Die folgende *vita Veri* zeigt wieder einen sehr sparsamen Gebrauch von kommentierenden Bemerkungen. Es gibt nur den sachlichen Verweis auf die *vita Marci* in 2,3.⁵ Am Ende der *Vita*, 11,2-4, also nach dem Bericht über Tod und Bestattung, greift der Autor offensichtlich auf die *vita Marci* zurück, um nachdrücklich die Geschichte von der Vergiftung des Verus durch Marcus zu widerlegen.⁶ Dass es sich hier um eine nachträgliche Erweiterung handelt, wird nicht nur daraus ersichtlich, dass die Polemik fehl am Platze ist, sondern auch durch die Verwendung des in den späteren Viten häufigen Ausdrucks *in medio relinquere* und, wiederum, durch die Invokation Diokletians.

Die *vita Avidii Cassii* unterscheidet sich bekanntlich von allen vorgehenden durch das Übermass an erfundenem Material, Briefen und Reden, die dazu dienen, die dürftige, der *vita Marci* entlehnte Information auszuschmücken. Allen Eigentümlichkeiten, die bei der Addition zur *vita Marci* aufgeführt wurden, begegnen wir hier wieder. Selbstkommentare aber gibt es nur zwei, beide innerhalb der *Vita*,⁷ wobei der erste

⁵ V 2,3 *ea quidem lege, ut filiam Pii Verus acciperet, quae data est Marco idcirco, quia hic adhuc impar videbatur aetate, ut in Marci vita exposuimus* (≈ MA 6,2).

⁶ V 11,2 *nota est fabula, quam Marci non capit vita, quod... 4 quod nos non in medio relinquemus, sed totum purgatum confutatumque respuimus.*

⁷ AC 3,2 *addemus autem, quemadmodum ad imperium venerit et quemadmodum sit occisus et ubi victus. proposui enim, Diocletiane Auguste, omnes, qui imperatorium nomen sive <iusta causa sive> iniusta habuerunt, in litteras mittere, ut omnes purpuratos, Auguste, cognosceres, und 13,8 haec sunt, quae de Cassio Avidio conperimus.*

programmatische Bedeutung hat, weil der Autor bei dem ersten Tyrannus das Programm, das er am Anfang der Aeliusvita bekannt gegeben hatte, in dem Sinne erweitert, dass jetzt auch Usurpatoren behandelt werden sollen. Einen Zusammenhang zwischen dem Programm und der eigentlichen Vita gibt es übrigens kaum, denn was auch immer folgen mag, es ist nicht *quemadmodum ad imperium venerit et quemadmodum sit occisus et ubi victus*.

In der Reihe *Commodus*, *Pertinax*, *Didius Iulianus* fehlen kommentierende Bemerkungen fast ganz. Allerdings beginnt die *vita Commodi* mit einem ganz natürlichen Verweis auf die *vita Marci*, um die Geschichte des Geschlechts darzulegen,⁸ und am Ende, wiederum nach der Beschreibung seines Todes, kündigt der Autor eine Addition an, in diesem Fall die langen Senatsakklamationen aus Marius Maximus.⁹ Am Ende der *Pertinaxvita* aber teilt uns der Autor mit, dass er einen der *vita Pertinacis* von Marius Maximus angefügten Brief nicht hat aufnehmen wollen *ob nimiam longitudinem*.¹⁰

Der Aufbau der *vita Severi* ist dem der Markusvita ganz ähnlich. Die detaillierte Behandlung des Lebens wird in 17,5 brüsk unterbrochen mit der Bemerkung *et quoniam longum est minora persequi*, die einen Passus einleitet (17,5–19,3), den Dessau als Entlehnung aus Aurelius Victor erkannt hat. Kapitel 20 fängt dann an mit dem Satz *legisse me apud Aelium Maurum Phlegontis Hadriani libertum memini*, dem ein Exkurs folgt, der erstens das Thema der Antonine einführt, zweitens in schulmeisterlicher Weise unter Anwendung aller im Passus der *vita Marci* angeführten Stilmittel das Thema der schlechten Söhne guter Väter durch die ganze römische Geschichte verfolgt.

Das Diptychon der Tyrannenviten *PN* und *CIA* besteht überwiegend aus Anekdoten und Briefen, die zum aussichtsreichen Genre der *iudicia principum* gehören. Die Viten sind engstens miteinander verbunden, denn in *PN* 9,3, einer programmatischen Passage mit Invokation von Diokletian, kündigt der Autor die *vita Albini* an,¹¹ während in der *Clodiusvita* auf die *Pescennius Niger* zurückgegriffen wird.¹² Ich merke

⁸ C 1,1 *de Commodi Antonini parentibus in vita Marci Antonini satis est disputatum*.

⁹ C 18,2 *ut autem sciretur, quod iudicium senatus de Commodo fuerit, ipsas adclamationes de Mario Maximo indidi et sententiam senatus consulti*.

¹⁰ P 15,8 *horruisse autem illum imperium epistula docet, quae vitae illius a Mario Maximo apposita est. quam ego inseri ob nimiam longitudinem nolui*.

¹¹ PN 9,3 *sequitur nunc ut de Clodio Albino dicam, qui quasi socius huius habetur, quod et pariter contra Severum rebellavit et ab eodem victi atque occisi sunt*.

¹² CIA 1,4 *sortem illam, qua Severum laudatum in Pescennii vita diximus (= PN 8,1 „optimus est Fuscus, bonus Afer, pessimus Albus“), ad se trahebat, nolens intellegi „pessimus Albus“*.

beiläufig an, dass im 9. Kapitel der Pescenniusvita die Rede ist von Usurpatoren aus der Periode vor dem Anfang der *HA*, Vindex, Piso, und Antonius.¹³ Die Albinusvita enthält des weiteren einen ganz allgemeinen Verweis auf die *vita Severi*,¹⁴ wobei der Leser nebenbei an Marius Maximus und Herodian weitergereicht wird. Der letztere erscheint hier bekanntlich zum ersten Mal auf der Bildfläche.

Die Arbeitsweise des Autors in der *vita Caracalli* erinnert an die in der Marcus- und der Severusvita. Zu Anfang verweist er den Leser hinsichtlich der Geschichte der Familie auf die *vita Severi*.¹⁵ Auch hier fährt er nach der Beschreibung des Todes unbeschwert und mit grossem Aufwand an Gelehrsamkeit fort. Interessant ist dabei die Verwendung von *scire* in einer Weise, die an die letzten Viten erinnert.¹⁶ Gegen die Behauptung, Caracalla habe die Isisverehrung in Rom introduziert, erhebt der Autor Einspruch.¹⁷ Hohl verglich hiermit im Apparat korrekterweise PN 6,9 und nicht C 9,4.¹⁸ Das seltene *pausa*, ein Terminus technicus des Isis-Kultes, der nach Angabe des Thesaurus nur hier und in der Pescenniusvita auftaucht, macht klar, dass diese zwei Stellen aufeinander bezogen werden sollen. Schliesslich bietet die Caracallavita einen Vorgriff auf die *vita Getae*,¹⁹ in der der Autor die Reihenfolge Cc.–G mit fast den gleichen Worten rechtfertigt, die er auch am Anfang der Verusvita benutzt hatte, um die Folge MA–V zu verteidigen. Die *vita Getae* endlich, die letzte vor der Macrinusvita, enthält nur einen internen Verweis.

¹³ PN 9,2 *inde quod latet Vindex, quod Piso nescitur, quod omnes illi, qui aut tantum adoptati sint aut a militibus imperatores appellati, ut sub Domitiano Antonius, aut cito interempti vitam cum imperii usurpatione posuerunt.*

¹⁴ CIA 12,14 *quae quidem omnia in vita eius (=Severi) sunt. quae qui diligentius scire velit, legat Marium Maximum de Latinis scriptoribus, de Graecis scriptoribus Herodianum, qui ad fidem pleraque dixerunt.*

¹⁵ Cc. 1,2 *de cuius maioribus frustra putamus iterandum. eum omnia in Severi vita satis dicta sint.*

¹⁶ Cc. 7,3 *et quoniam dei Luni fecimus mentionem, sciendum doctissimis quibusque id memoriae traditum e.q.s. ≈ Cl. 13,1; 8,1 scio de Papiniani nece multos ita in litteras rettulisse, ut caedis non adsciverint causam, aliis alia referentibus; sed ego malui varietatem opinionum edere quam de tanti viri caede reticere ≈ Q 1,1; 10,1 interest scire quemadmodum novercam suam Iuliam uxorem duxisse dicatur ≈ Tac. 3.1.*

¹⁷ Cc. 9,11 *in quo quidem mihi mirum videtur, quemadmodum sacra Isidis primum per hunc Romam venisse dicantur, cum Antoninus Commodus ita ea celebraverit, ut et Anubim portaret et pausas ederet.*

¹⁸ PN 6,9 *hunc (=Pescennium) ... videmus sacra Isidis ferentem; quibus Commodus adeo deditus fuit, ut et caput raderet et Anubim portaret et omnis pausas expleret; C 9,4 sacra Isidis coluit, ut et Anubim portaret.*

¹⁹ Cc. 11,1-2 *occidendi Getae multa prodigia extiterunt, ut in vita eius exponemus. nam quamvis prior ille e vita excesserit, nos tamen ordinem secuti sumus, ut qui et prior natus est et qui prior imperare coeperat, prior scriberetur.*

In einem Prologus wirft der Autor die Frage auf, warum Geta einer eigenen Vita würdig befunden wird.²⁰ In der Formulierung der Frage liegt schon die Antwort beschlossen: das Thema des *nomen Antoninorum* hat ihn dazu veranlasst.

Betrachten wir die Ergebnisse dieses ersten Streifzuges im Überblick, dann stellen wir fest, dass sich die weitaus meisten Selbstkommentare in den Nebenviten *Ael.*, *AC*, *PN*, *CLA* und in den Passagen der Hauptviten *MA*, *S* und *Cc.* finden, die als Neuansätze nach dem Todesbericht gekennzeichnet werden können und in Wortwahl und Rhetorisierung mit den Nebenviten und ganz besonders den Viten der Pollio- und Vopiscusreihe verwandt sind.

Die stilistischen Übereinstimmungen zwischen diesen Einlagen in den Hauptviten, den Nebenviten und den Viten im letzten Teil der *HA* hat, meiner Ansicht nach, am besten Wölfflin in seiner einhundert Jahre alten, auf Bitten Mommsens geschriebenen, Abhandlung über die *HA* herausgearbeitet.²¹ Wölfflin wird zwar gemeinhin zu den konservativen Pluralisten gerechnet, seine Schlussfolgerung aber, dass sich in all diesen Passagen derselbe Autor manifestiert, den er in dieser Studie als Vopiscus identifiziert, scheint mir unabweichlich. Sie beruht auf der Observation der selben Data, die Unitarier dazu geführt haben, Passagen wie diese auf das Konto des Autors und nicht seiner Quelle zu schreiben. Umstritten ist im Grunde nur die Frage, wie man den Text benennen soll, in den diese Passagen eingefügt worden sind. Wölfflin betrachtete ihn als Werk des Spartianus und folglich die Einlagen als Interpolationen, die er dem Schlussredaktor Vopiscus zuschrieb. Da sich der Glaube an die handschriftliche Zuweisung an die ersten vier *scriptores* als unhaltbar erwiesen hat, müsste ein Pluralist im Geiste Wölfflins seine Beschreibung heutzutage in dem Sinne modifizieren, dass der Autor eine nicht näher zu benennende Quelle herangezogen hat, in die er seine Bemerkungen interpoliert hat. Unitarier auf der anderen Seite nennen den Text einen vom Autor selbst hergestellten Auszug aus der Hauptquelle der Reihe bis Macrinus, in den der Autor seinen persönlichen Kommentar eingegliedert hat. Der Unterschied ist vielleicht nicht nur terminologisch. Die unitarische Erklärung nämlich macht das Vorkommen dieser Zusätze mit ihren abrupten Übergängen und stilistischen Eigentümlichkeiten, „the late and bad passages“, wie

²⁰ *G 1,1 de cuius priusquam vel vita vel nece dicam, disseram, cur et ipsi Antonino a Severo patre sit nomen adpositum.*

²¹ Wölfflin 1891, 482-538.

Syme sie nannte, nach der Beschreibung von Tod und Bestattung weniger begreiflich als die Hypothese einer Überarbeitung, im Laufe derer der Redaktor seine Quelle hin und wieder drastisch verkürzt oder gegebenenfalls auch erweitert hat. Nach dieser Ansicht, die meines Erachtens der Unterschiedlichkeit in diesem ersten Teil der *HA* am besten gerecht wird, sind also zwei Hände im Spiel und ist der Text, so wie wir ihn lesen, in mindestens zwei Phasen zustande gekommen.

Bemerkenswert ist schliesslich noch für diesen ersten Teil, dass die Selbstkommentare in den Hauptviten ganz sachlich und darauf angelegt sind, überflüssigen Wiederholungen, z.B. über die Geschichte des Kaisergeschlechts, vorzubeugen, während die Ankündigungen in den Nebenviten deutlich machen, dass der Autor ein Gesamtwerk im Sinne hatte, in das er auch *Caesares* und *tyranni* einbeziehen wollte, wobei der Diktator Caesar den Anfang und Diokletian den Abschluss bilden sollte (cf. Syme 1971, 69).

Die stilistischen und kompositorischen Übereinstimmungen zwischen den Nebenviten machen es plausibel, dass sie *en bloc* verfasst worden sind, eine Vermutung, die Syme (1971, 68) und Barnes (1970, 30) mehrmals geäussert haben. Soweit ich sehen kann, enthalten die Kommentare des Autors bis zu diesem Punkt keinen Hinweis auf die Reihenfolge, in der die Haupt- und Nebenviten zustande gekommen sind. Das wird sich ändern, sobald wir uns der Alexandervita zuwenden.

In dem vielfach erörterten Vorwort zur Macrinusvita gibt der Autor seine Absicht bekannt, *principes obscuriores*, seien es *tyranni* oder *Caesares*, zu behandeln (cf. Rösger 1980, 182-3). Er bezieht sich nicht auf frühere Viten, so dass ein richtiger Neuansatz vorzuliegen scheint. Von einem Ende der Arbeit ist ebenfalls nicht die Rede. Es ist äusserst befremdend, dass zwischen dem Vorwort und der folgenden Vita überhaupt kein Zusammenhang zu bestehen scheint, – als hätte man es nachträglich vor dem eigentlichen Anfang der Vita eingefügt.²² Sonderbar ist auch, dass der Biograph Cordus, der schon in *CLA* 7,2 aufgetreten war, hier als Exempel angeführt wird. Ich komme hierauf noch zurück. Innerhalb der Vita, die, obwohl Macrinus ein echter Augustus gewesen ist, in jeder Hinsicht als eine Nebenvita gelten sollte, gibt es nur einen Querverweis auf die folgende Diadumenusvita, der zugleich den einzi-

²² Die Lage am Anfang von *Hel.* ist ganz ähnlich: nach einer kurzen einführenden Bemerkung beginnt die eigentliche Vita mit *Igitur occiso Macrino eiusque filio Diadumeno* (*Hel.* 1,4).

gen Grund für das Verfassen dieser Vita überhaupt enthält.²³ In vergleichbarer Weise bietet die Diadumenusvita am Ende eine Ankündigung der *Vita Heliogabali*.²⁴ Querverweise dieser Art werde ich im folgenden ausser Betracht lassen, weil sie an und für sich ganz unproblematisch sind, um mich auf jene Querverweise konzentrieren zu können, die die Verbindungslinien zwischen den Viten sichtbar machen.

Die Heliogabalusvita ist in dieser Hinsicht sehr wichtig. Ungefähr in der Hälfte, wo der Autor sagt, dass er nur über die *luxuria*, nicht aber über die *obscaena* des Kaisers schreiben möchte, erwähnt er die *damnatio memoriae*, auf die er am Anfang der AS-vita zurückkommt.²⁵ Dies ist nur eine von vielen Übereinstimmungen zwischen diesen beiden Viten, die sie zu einem Diptychon zu vereinen scheinen.²⁶ Am Ende der Heliogabalusvita äussert sich der Autor über sein Arbeitsvorhaben. Der Anfang seiner Arbeit bleibt unklar, – wir vernehmen nur, dass dies nicht seine erste Vita gewesen sei.²⁷ Des weiteren teilt er uns mit, dass er die Reihe bis einschliesslich Diokletian und Maximian fortsetzen möchte. Das Leben Konstantins werde er anderen, begabteren Biographen überlassen.²⁸ Der folgende Satz ist nicht nur inhaltlich absurd, sondern auch ein vollkommenes *non sequitur*. Wenn der Autor Konstantin und seine Zeitgenossen und Rivalen anderen überlässt, wozu dann noch diese persönliche Stellungnahme (*non enim ego id faciam*)? Wölfflin verunsicherte diese Stelle so sehr, dass er glaubte, der Autor beabsichtige, selber über diese Personen zu schreiben. Das ist aber mit dem Text in 35,5 unvereinbar. Ich fürchte also, dass diese Stelle nicht nur historische Unmöglichkeiten, sondern auch innere Inkonsistenzen enthält, mit denen

²³ OM 10,6 *non enim aliquid dignum in eius vita erit, quod dicatur, praeter hoc quod Antoninorum nomini est velut nothus adpositus*.

²⁴ Dd. 9,6 *de quo quidem, quia multa sunt, loco suo disseram*.

²⁵ Hel. 18,2 *quem nec ego Antoninum vocassem nisi causa cognitionis, quae cogit plerumque dici ea etiam nomina, quae sunt abolita* ≈ AS 1,1 *quia et nihil Antoninorum pestis illa ostendit et hoc nomen ex annalibus senatus auctoritate erasum est*.

²⁶ Cf. Hönn 1911. Man vergleiche z.B. auch AS 24,4 *habuit in animo, ut exsoletos vetaret, quod postea Filippus fecit* ≈ Hel. 32,6 *fecit hoc etiam de pueris et tunc, ante Philippum utpote, licebat*.

²⁷ Hel. 35,1 *haec sunt de Heliogabalo, cuius vitam me invitum ac retractantem ex Graecis Latinisque collectam scribere ac tibi offerre voluisti, cum iam aliorum ante tulerimus. scribere autem ordiar qui post sequentur*.

²⁸ *ibid.* 35,4-7 *his iungendi sunt Diocletianus, aurei parens saeculi, et Maximianus, ut vulgo dicitur, ferrei, ceterique ad pietatem tuam (sc. Constantini). te vero, Auguste venerabilis, multis paginis isdemque disertioribus illi prosequuntur, quibus id felicius natura detulerit. his addendi sunt Licinius, Severus, Alexander atque Maxentius quorum omnium ius in dicionem tuam venit, sed ita ut nihil eorum virtuti derogetur. non enim ego id faciam, quod plerique scriptores solent, ut de his detraham, qui victi sunt e.q.s.*

sich der Autor vermutlich dafür entschuldigt, dass er auch *tyranni* zu behandeln beabsichtigt.

Wenden wir uns der *vita Alexandri* zu. Der Anfang ist durch das Thema des *nomen Antoninorum* engstens mit den vorhergehenden *Vitae G, OM, Dd.* und *Hel.* verbunden. Es scheint mir äusserst bedeutsam, dass in der Aufzählung der Antonini in AS 10 Geta fehlt, der diesen Namen ja wirklich nie getragen hat, während er in *G, OM* und *Dd.* zu den Antoninen gezählt wird und man in *OM* 3 sogar ein Orakel der *dea Caelestis* bemüht, um die Zahl der Antonini auf acht zu bringen.²⁹ Sollte man daraus nicht schliessen, dass die Passagen in *G, OM* und *Dd.* spätere Erweiterungen sind und dass diese Viten nach der *Alexandervita* geschrieben wurden?

Die Stelle AS 30,6 hat schon öfter Anlass zu der Frage nach der Priorität im Vergleich mit *H* 21,4 und *Ael.* 5,4 gegeben.³⁰ Ein Vergleich dieser Stellen zwingt dazu anzunehmen, dass die *Aelius*-Stelle eine spätere Erweiterung ist, die vom *one upmanship* des Autors zeugt.³¹ Mich überzeugt Symes Annahme nicht, dass der Autor, nachdem er die Stelle der *Hadrianusvita* so nachdrücklich korrigiert hatte, „forgot, or rather chose to neglect” this (1972, 126).

In AS 35,1 lesen wir dass Alexander lieber Rednern und Dichtern zuhörte, die die Heldentaten aus alter Zeit verherrlichten als Panegyriker. Hier folgte er dem Vorbild des *Pescennius*.³² In der Tat finden wir in dessen *Vita* (*PN* 11,5) die gleiche Nachricht. Syme hat diese Stelle als Indiz für die Priorität der *Pescenniusvita* gewertet, weil die Nachricht in AS nicht auf irgendeine historische Quelle, sondern nur auf die Phantasie des Autors in der *Nebenvita* zurückgeht. Es ist aber m.E. sehr wohl möglich, dass der Autor in AS eine Nachricht aus *Marius Maximus* ungeschminkt wiedergibt und dass dieselbe Nachricht in der *Pescenniusvita* erweitert und gewissermassen illustriert wird.

²⁹ AS 10,5 *sic Antoninus, id est Pius Marcum et item Verum iure adoptionis vocavit, Commodo autem hereditarium fuit, susceptum Diadumeno, adfectatum in Bassiano, ridiculum in Vario.*

³⁰ AS 30,6 *ususque est Hadriani tetrafarmacum frequenter, de quo in libris suis Marius Maximus loquitur, cum Hadriani disserit vitam* ≈ *H* 21,4 *inter cibos unice amavit tetrafarmacum, quod erat de fasiano, sumine, perna et crustulo* ≈ *Ael.* 5,4-5 *nam tetrafarmacum, seu potius pentefarmacum, quo postea semper Hadrianus est usus, ipse dicitur repperisse ... de quo genere cibi aliter refert Marius Maximus, non pentefarmacum, sed tetrafarmacum appellans, ut et nos ipsi in eius vita persecuti sumus.*

³¹ Ein vergleichbarer Fall ist *Gall.* 18,5 *porticum Flaminiam usque ad pontem Molvium et ipse paraverat ducere, ita ut tetrastichae fierent, ut autem alii dicunt, pentastichae.*

³² AS 35,1 *oratores et poetas non sibi panegyricos dicentes, quod exemplo Nigri Pescennii stultum ducebat, ... libenter audivit.*

Die AS-vita endet wie die Heliogabalusvita mit einem Arbeitsvorhaben. Nach der Erwähnung von Kaisern die sehr kurz regiert haben in 64,1, – vergleichbar mit *Hel.* 35,2 und, wie ich meine von Herodian inspiriert – ³³, fährt er fort: *usque ad Aurelianum et deinceps, de quibus, si vita suppeditaverit, ea quae conperta fuerint, publicabimus*. Die vorhergehende Dedikation an Konstantin macht klar, dass mit *et deinceps* die Kaiser bis auf Diokletian und Maximian gemeint sind. Von Licinius und den anderen, die in *Hel.* 35 genannt wurden, ist hier nicht die Rede. Sowohl das Ziel, das sich der Autor hier stellt, als auch die Formulierung stimmen mit *Pr.* 1,5 überein, einschliesslich der Tacitus entnommenen Phrase *si vita suppeditet* bzw. *suppeditaverit*, die uns auch in *A* 24,9 und *Pr.* 24,8 begegnet.³⁴

Die Reihe *Max.–Gd.* enthält verschiedene Querverweise, die aber, soweit ich sehen kann, nicht problematisch sind und die ich deshalb ausser Betracht lassen möchte. Gegen Ende der Gallienusvita, in 19,6-7, kündigt der Autor die Tyrannenviten an: *placuit viginti tyrannos uno volumine includere*. In der unmittelbaren Fortsetzung, §7, ist von dreissig Tyrannen die Rede. Es wäre grundfalsch hier zu emendieren, denn im 16. und 21. Kapitel wird ebenfalls von zwanzig Tyrannen gesprochen. Die Konfusion zeigt, wie flüchtig diese Vita zusammengeschrieben ist.

Selbstkommentare häufen sich bekanntlich in den Viten die Trebellius Pollio und Vopiscus zugeschrieben sind. Ich beschränke mich auf die m.E. wichtigsten Fälle. Zuerst möchte ich mich mit *T* 31,8 beschäftigen.³⁵ Nachdem der Autor die Zahl von dreissig Tyrannen erreicht hat, indem er zwei weibliche Tyranne in seine Sammlung aufgenommen hat, revidiert er sich und ersetzt seine Zenobia und Victoria durch Titus und Censorinus. Er bittet seinen Freund um Verständnis für diese

³³ Man vergleiche Hdn. 1,1,4-5 τυράννων τε καὶ βασιλέων παραδόξους βίους πρότερον ἢ σπανίως ἢ μηδ' ὅλως μνημονευθέντας. ὧν οἱ μὲν ἐπιμηκεστέραν ἔσχον τὴν ἀρχὴν, οἱ δὲ πρόσκαιρον τὴν δυναστείαν. εἰσι δ' οἱ μέχρι προσηγορίας καὶ τιμῆς ἐφημέρου μόνης ἐλθόντες κατελύθησαν ≈ AS 64,1 *post eum certatim inruentibus et aliis semenstribus, aliis annuis, plerisque per biennium imperantibus usque ad eos principes, qui latius imperium tetenderunt, Aurelianum dico et deinceps; Ael.* 1,1 *qui vel Caesarum nomine appellati sunt nec principes aut Augusti fuerunt vel quolibet alio genere aut in famam aut in spem principatus venerunt; PN* 9,2 *aut cito interempti vitam cum imperii usurpatione posuerunt*.

³⁴ *Pr.* 1,5 *sed non patiar ego ille, a quo dudum solus Aurelianus est expetitus, cuius vitam quantum potui persecutus, Tacito Florianoque iam scriptis non me ad Probi facta conscendere, si vita suppetet omnes, qui supersunt usque ad Maximianum Diocletianumque, dicturus*.

³⁵ *T* 31,8 *quaeso, qui expletum iam librum acceperas, boni consulas atque hos volumini tuo volens addas, quos ego, quem ad modum Valentem superiorem huic volumini, sic post Claudium et Aurelianum his, qui inter Tacitum et Diocletianum fuerunt, addere destinaveram*.

Manöver und teilt mit, dass es seine Absicht gewesen sei, die beiden unter den Tyrannen *inter Tacitum et Diocletianum* einzuordnen. Das bedeutet aber ganz einfach, dass „Pollio“ beabsichtigt, das zu tun, was „Vopiscus“ wirklich ausgeführt hat. Hohl (1912, 481) hat hierin, wie ich meine mit vollem Recht, einen Hinweis vom Autor selbst erblickt, dass diese beiden *scriptores* miteinander identisch sind.

Der Anfang der Claudiusvita ist wichtig, nicht nur, weil der Autor auf den Caesar Constantius verweist – das hatte er bereits in der Gallienusvita mehrmals getan, sondern auch wegen der Phrase *cum cura*, mit der er die gründliche Behandlung des Claudius der flüchtigeren der dreissig Tyranni gegenüberstellt.³⁶ Wir finden denselben Gegensatz wieder in dem Proömium zur Aureliansvita in den Worten *tam claros quam obscuros* (A 2,1). Die Kritik des Stadtpräfekten Tiberianus an Trebellius Pollio (*multa incuriose, multa breviter*) ist in erster Linie auf die Tyrannenviten zu beziehen.³⁷ Übrigens legt der Autor diese Kritik dem Stadtpräfekten in den Mund. Dort, wo er sein eigenes Urteil abgibt, in Q 1,3, finden wir das genaue Gegenteil und wird Trebellius Pollio wegen seiner *diligentia* und *cura* gepriesen.³⁸

In den Viten des angeblichen Vopiscus gibt es, wie gesagt, eine Fülle von Selbstkommentaren, die diese Viten zu einer geschlossenen Einheit machen. Ich beende diesen Überblick mit dem einzigen Kommentar der für die Genese der *Historia Augusta* von Interesse zu sein scheint, dem Proömium zu den *Quadrigae tyrannorum*. In Q 1,1-3 behauptet der Autor, Sueton und Marius Maximus hätten unbedeutende Tyrannen ungenügend gewürdigt.³⁹ Sueton hat Antonius und Vindex nur flüchtig erwähnt. Marius Maximus hat Avidius Cassius, Pescennius Niger und Clodius Albinus in Viten aufgenommen, die andern gewidmet waren. Der Autor stellt diesen beiden Biographen das Beispiel des gewissen-

³⁶ Cl. 1,1 *ventum est ad principem Claudium, qui nobis intuitu Constanti Caesaris cum cura in litteras digerendus est. de quo ego idcirco recusare non potui quod alios, tumultuarios videlicet imperatores, scripseram eo libro, quem de triginta tyrannis edidi.*

³⁷ A 2,1 *ac quoniam nobis sermo de Trebellio Pollione, qui a duobus Philippis usque ad divum Claudium et eius fratrem Quintillum imperatores tam claros quam obscuros memoriae prodidit ... fuit adserente Tiberiano, quod Pollio multa incuriose, multa breviter prodidisset e.q.s..*

³⁸ Q 1,3 *atque contra Trebellius Pollio ea fuit diligentia, ea cura ... ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet.*

³⁹ Q 1,1 *minusculos tyrannos scio plerosque tacuisse aut breviter praeterisse. nam et Suetonius Tranquillus ... Antonium, Vindicem tacuit ... et Marius Maximus, qui Avidium Marci temporibus, Albinum et Nigrum Severi non suis propriis libris sed alienis innexuit ... 3 atque contra Trebellius Pollio ea fuit diligentia, ea cura ... ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet.*

haften Trebellius Pollio gegenüber, der nicht weniger als dreissig Tyrannen in einem Buch behandelt hatte, und verspricht, selber das gleiche zu tun, indem er Saturninus, Bonosus, Proculus und Firmus in einem Buch beschreiben werde. Dies hat mich immer sehr befremdet. Warum erwähnt der angebliche Vopiscus mit keinem Wort seine angeblichen Kollegen Gallicanus, Spartianus und Capitolinus, die durchaus getan hatten, was Marius Maximus versäumt hatte? Logischerweise sollte man hieraus doch schliessen, dass es in dem Moment, da dies geschrieben wurde, die Tyrannenviten *AC*, *PN* und *CLA* noch nicht gab. Dann wäre aber Trebellius Pollio der *auctor intellectualis* der Nebenviten, oder, anders und besser gesagt, dann wäre das Buch der *Tyranni triginta* der Ansatz zum Schreiben der sonstigen Tyrannenviten gewesen. Das scheint mir a priori recht glaubhaft, denn die Regierungsperiode von Valerian und Gallien eignet sich wie keine andere dazu, einen Kaiserbiographen auf den Gedanken zu bringen, wenn nicht gar zu zwingen, Tyrannenviten zu schreiben.

Wie phantastisch der Gedanke an eine Reihe Tyrannenviten auch erscheinen mag, es gibt dafür eine faszinierende Parallele. Ich denke an den Bericht über eine Reihe von jambischen Trimetern, die dem Veroneser Historiker Johannes de Matociis (14. Jh.) zufolge Ausonius verfasst hätte *de imperatoribus res novas molitis a Decio usque ad Dioclecianum versu iambico trimetro iuxta libros Eusebii Nannetici ystorici*.⁴⁰ Laut dieser Nachricht, die angesichts der erhaltenen Kataloggedichte des Ausonius Vertrauen verdient, ist es also die gleiche Periode die zu einer Behandlung von Gegenkaisern Anlass gegeben hat.

Über das Verhältnis zwischen den Iamben des Ausonius und den Tyrannenviten in der *HA* lässt sich nichts mit Sicherheit sagen. Es ist aber schwer vorstellbar, dass zwei Werke aus der gleichen Zeit und zum gleichen, unüblichen Thema keinerlei Beziehung zueinander hätten. Barnes (1967, 70) hat schon vor Jahren in *OM* 7,7 eine Anspielung auf Ausonius entdeckt: *denique versus exstant cuiusdam poetae*. Ich möchte dem Dossier über Ausonius zwei Punkte hinzufügen. Das erste ist literarisch, das zweite lexikalisch. In der Macrinusvita finden wir wiederholt Verse, die angeblich aus dem Griechischen übersetzt sein sollen. Die einzige mir bekannte kontemporäre Parallele dazu bieten die Epigramme des Ausonius. Auch das Spiel mit Reminiszenzen an die klassische Poesie ist

⁴⁰ Green 1981, 228-30; J. P. Callu in der Introduction Générale zur Budé-Ausgabe der *Historia Augusta*, Paris 1992, LI, der dazu bemerkt dass sowohl die dreissig Usurpatoren in *T*, als auch die vier in *Q* zu dieser Kategorie gehören.

Ausonius' Centoartiger Arbeitsweise verwandt.⁴¹ Zweitens bedankt sich der Autor in dem bereits erwähnten Kapitel *T* 31.9 bei seinem Gönner dafür, dass er ihn vor einem Fehler bewahrt habe: *errorem meum memor historiae diligentia tuae eruditionis avertit*. Die Verbindung *memor historiae* wird, wie der Thesaurus s.v. *memor* angibt, nur noch an einer anderen Stelle gefunden, nämlich bei Ausonius im Tetrastichon zu Anfang seiner *Caesares: incipiam a divo percurramque ordine cunctos / novi Romanae quos memor historiae*.

Kehren wir zu dem Proömium *Q* zurück. Die Reihe der dort genannten Tyrannen Avidius Cassius, Clodius Albinus und Pescennius Niger steht auch am Anfang der Alexandervita. Neben ihnen werden ebenfalls illegitime Herrscher aus der von Sueton bearbeiteten Periode erwähnt (*antea*).⁴² In der vergleichbaren Stelle *PN* 9,2 fehlen diese aber wieder.⁴³ Wenn es nun richtig ist, dass die Nebenviten später geschrieben wurden als die Alexandervita und dass der Anlass zum Schreiben dieser Viten die Behandlung der dreissig Tyrannen und der *Quadrigae tyrannorum* gewesen ist, wird diese Schwankung m.E. verständlich. Der Autor fing an bei der *vita Alexandri* und griff gegen Ende seiner Arbeit, nachdem er seine Virtuosität in *T* und *Q* gezeigt hatte, auf den Anfang seiner Arbeit zurück, um nachträglich auch die dort genannten Gegenkaiser in einer eigenen Vita zu behandeln. Wenn die Reihe in der Pescenniusvita noch einmal auftaucht, werden nur noch Vindex und statt Antonius Piso, also Gegenkaiser aus dem ersten Jahrhundert erwähnt, weil der Autor das Fehlen des Pescennius, Clodius und Avidius Cassius eben wettgemacht hatte.

Der Gedanke, dass der Autor mit *AS* angefangen hat, ist nicht neu. Im Jahre 1971 hatte schon Cameron in seiner Rezension von Syme *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* diesen Vorschlag gemacht, und Syme hat sich eingehend damit befasst.⁴⁴ Seine Gründe, die Hypothese letztendlich abzuweisen, haben mich, wie gesagt, nicht überzeugt. Die Querver-

⁴¹ Hohl hat auf die Übereinstimmung zwischen *OM* 14,2 mit Suet. *Jul.* 51 in *calvus moechus* hingewiesen. Der vorangehende Vers *centum nam moechos passa est centumque rogavit* ist aber ebenfalls eine Reminiszenz, an Cat. 11,17- 8 *cum suis vivat valeatque moechis / quos simul complexa tenet trecentos*. Und das soll eine Übersetzung aus dem Griechischen sein!

⁴² *AS* 1,7 *nam et Pescennium Nigrum et Clodium Albinum et Avidium Cassium et antea Lucium Vindicem et L. Antonium et ipsum Severum ... imperatores fecerant* (sc. milites).

⁴³ *PN* 9,2 *inde quod latet Vindex, quod Piso nescitur* e.q.s..

⁴⁴ Cameron 1971, Syme 1972. Barnes (1978, 58 n.123) hat die Möglichkeit, dass *AS* eher geschrieben wurde als *PN* bezweifelt.

weise, die ich besprochen habe, machen es m.E. wahrscheinlich, dass der Autor, nachdem er als Nachfolger von Sueton und Marius Maximus angefangen hatte, eine dritte Reihe von Kaiserviten zu schreiben, durch seine Erfahrungen mit der Bearbeitung der Periode um 250 inspiriert wurde auch älteren Gegenkaisern Biographien zu widmen, sowie ihn die Behandlung der Kaiserbrüder Quintillus und Florianus veranlasst haben kann, die *Caesares* Aelius, Geta und Diadumenus zu beschreiben. Die Reihe von *principes obscuriores*, wozu ausser *T* und *Q* auch *Ael.*, *AC*, *PN*, *CLA*, *G*, *OM* und *Dd.* gerechnet werden müssen,⁴⁵ hat er, wie ich vermute, nach dem Abschluss der Vopiscus-viten verfasst.

Ich bin mir der Verwegenheit der letzten Hypothese, die ich vorbringen möchte wohl bewusst, wage es aber sie zu äussern, weil sie auf tekstuelle und stilistische Beobachtungen beruht. Die Hauptviten *H–Cc.* hat der Autor meiner Meinung nach als letzte in seine Sammlung aufgenommen, weil die Viten der *minuscule tyranni* ohne den Kontext der Lebensbeschreibungen gleichsam in der Luft schwebten. Er tat es vermutlich ungerne, weil sich in deren wohlbekannter Geschichte nur wenig Gelegenheit für freie Erfindung bot. Er erledigte sich seiner Pflicht, indem er ganz einfach bestehende, solide Biographien in seine Sammlung aufnahm, die er nur ab und zu mit persönlichen Bemerkungen ein wenig aufpolierte. Diese Annahme einer retrograden Erweiterung des Corpus wird m.E. der stilistischen Eigenart der Hauptviten, sowie wir sie lesen, besser gerecht als die Hypothese der allmählichen Entfaltung der schriftstellerischen Qualitäten des Autors, die Syme befürwortet hat. Die Richtigkeit aber seiner Einschätzung der Nebenviten kann nicht bezweifelt werden: „the primary lives were the secondary concern of the author”.

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⁴⁵ Die Diskrepanz zwischen der Erwähnung von Cordus in *CLA* 7,2 und seiner nachträglichen Vorstellung in *OM* 1,3 würde verschwinden, wenn man das Vorwort zu *OM* als Proömium zu dieser ganzen Sammlung betrachten dürfte.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SOME NOTES ON THE *VITA TACITI*

The *vita Taciti* is an ideal object of study for an intending commentator whose interest is primarily literary. It offers little scope for serious technical research demanding competence in the fields of prosopography, epigraphy or papyrology, for the simple reason that the factual information in the *vita* is minimal. On the other hand, it displays a rich literary inventiveness in its numerous documents, speeches, acclamations and letters. It is an excellent specimen of what Syme has called the mature manner of the author.

The historical foundation on which the *vita Taciti* rests, rather like a pyramid upside down, has been treated by Hohl (1911) and Syme (1971, 237-47). As Baynes has said in a memorable phrase 'to praise Hohl would be an impertinence'. I limit myself therefore to saying that in everything that has been written subsequently on the life of Tacitus, Hohl's observations are repeated. Even Syme's assessment of the life in his *Emperors and Biography*, for all its brilliance, does not go far beyond Hohl. Needless to say that no future commentator of this life can avoid repeating much of what Hohl has brought forward in that article.¹

However, Hohl's article does not amount to a full commentary. It is an analysis, a *Prüfung*, as he called it himself, in which he discussed those problems that Mommsen (1890, 281) wished to see treated in the commentary he asked for in 1890: 'einen Commentar, welcher für jede einzelne Notiz die in der Sammlung selbst so wie ausserhalb derselben auftretenden Parallelstellen vor die Augen führt oder auch deren Mangel constatirt'. He does not give attention to linguistic detail for its own sake and says very little about rhetorical embellishments. His personal appreciation of these aspects only transpires in quotations from other scholars, such as 'unsagbar läppisch' (Hirschfeld) and casual remarks like 'töricht', 'ermüdend', 'völlig wertlos'. If it is agreed that a commentator should also give attention to these aspects – a *communis opinio* on this among intending commentators seems to me to be desirable – much work still has to be done. After Hohl, many scholars beside Syme

¹ Meanwhile, in 1996, Paschoud's commentary in the Budé-series has appeared; see Den Hengst's review in this book, chapter 17 (note eds.).

have touched upon passages in the *vita Taciti*. Most of their observations have found their way into the explanatory notes Nicole Ziegler has written for the Artemis-edition of the *HA* (=Hohl 1985, 407-14). These scholars tend to concentrate on three topics: the declamation against *principes pueri* by Maecius Faltonius Nicomachus in ch. 6, the story in ch. 10 about the transcription and preservation of the work of Cornelius Tacitus, *scriptor historiae Augustae*, and finally on ch. 15 with its prophecy of the emperor under whose reign the whole world from Ireland to Sri Lanka is to obey the laws of Rome.

It is not on these *panni purpurei* that I intend to make some preliminary remarks, but on the composition of the life, both with regard to its macrostructure, if I may call it that, and the composition in detail, its microstructure, as seen in the opening chapters of the life sentence by sentence. As I said, fiction supersedes fact almost completely in this life, but there is still an unmistakable dividing line even between this biography and true fiction, in that the author builds on some factual information. In order to appreciate his power of invention, we must first determine what his basic material was. This is extremely meagre. There are two sources for Tacitus' life, the Greek tradition preserved in Zosimus and Zonaras and the Latin tradition as preserved in Eutropius and Aurelius Victor. The Greek tradition, which plays an important role in the *vita Aureliani*, can be detected in chs. 7 and 13 of the *Tacitus* (cf. Barnes 1978, 76). In ch. 7.5-7 the author shows he is aware of the fact that, according to the Greek tradition, Tacitus was not in Rome when the senate chose him to succeed Aurelian.² According to Hohl, the author took his Latin material from the Kaisergeschichte. Here Syme improved on Hohl's analysis in showing that the *HA* derived directly from Victor. It is indeed on the personal comments Victor made on the *interregnum* that the *HA* embroidered, as we will see later on. Victor's account contains the following elements: after the murder of Aurelian, the army asked the senate to appoint a new emperor. A *combat de générosité* between senate and army ensued. In Victor's words (*Caes.* 35.11): *ita utrimque pudore ac modestia certabatur, rara in hominibus virtute, rebus praesertim huiuscemodi, ac prope ignota militibus*. This, according to Victor, reflects on Aurelian, to whom (*Caes.* 35.12): *soli quasi Romula interregni species obvenit, longe vero gloriosior*. Tacitus was appointed to the joy of all, because the senators had regained the right to choose the

² Cf. Zon. 12.28 τὸ στρατιοκὸν δὲ αὐτὸν ἀνηγόρευσε καὶ ἀπόντα ἐν Καμπανίᾳ γὰρ τότε διέτριβεν ≈ Tac. 7.5 *hoc loco tacendum non est plerosque in litteras rettulisse Tacitum absentem et in Campania positum principem nuncupatum: verum est nec dissimulare possum*.

emperor (*Caes.* 36.1): *cunctis fere laetioribus, quod militari ferocia ereptum legendi ius principis procures recepissent*. Their joy, however, did not last, since, after Tacitus' early death in Tyana, his brother Florianus took the purple, ignoring the will of senate and army alike. That is all.

Now let us see how the author proceeded to build a complete biography with the help of these data. The overall structure of the *vita Taciti* is as follows:

<i>Tac.</i> 1-2	essay on the <i>interregnum</i> ; circumstances of the murder of Aurelian
3-5.2	meeting of the senate; speech by Tacitus; acclamations
5.2-7.2	speech by Maecius Faltonius Nicomachus
7.2-4	Tacitus presented to the people by the praef. urbis Aelius Cesettianus
7.5-8.2	discussion of a different version
8.3-5	Tacitus presented to the troops by the praef. praet. Moesius Gallicanus
9	Tacitus' 'State of the Union'
10	financial and other measures; preservation of the historical work of Cornelius Tacitus, his ancestor
11	the emperor's private life
12	enthusiastic reaction of the senate
13	military successes; death of Tacitus
14	reign of Florianus; closing remark on Tacitus and Florianus <i>quasi quidam interreges inter Aurelianum et Probum</i>
15	prophecy of the haruspices about a future emperor, with personal comment by the author
16.1-4	postscriptum about a <i>congiarium</i> and portraits of Tacitus
16.5-8	closing statement, <i>laudatio</i> on Probus
17	postscriptum about <i>omina</i>
18-19	documentary evidence; letters to cities and private persons.

This summary shows that the factual contents of the *vita*, even if we accept the *interregnum* and the discussion in ch. 8 as such, forms a small part of the *vita*. Less than 10% of the lines deal with facts attested elsewhere. The rest of the life deals with the author's favourite topics, above all the supremacy of the senate, culminating in the letter sent by Claudius Sapidianus to Cereius Maecianus (19.3): *in antiquum statum senatus revertit, nos principes facimus, nostri ordinis sunt potestates*. Aurelius Victor not only influenced our author's phraseology, but determined the *vita* as a whole, which can only be described as a series of variations on themes by Victor. This holds true not only for the passage on the in-

terregnum, but also e.g. for the theme of the happiness of the senators at the choice of Tacitus. Victor's phrase is imitated in 12.1: *nec tacendum est et frequenter intimidandum tantam senatus laetitiam fuisse, quod eligendi principis cura ad ordinem amplissimum revertisset*, which in its turn is documented by the letters in chs. 18 and 19.

The same procedure is to be seen in the other *vitae* written by 'Vopiscus', that is to say in the mature manner of our author. It is hardly an exaggeration to claim that every word in the four Teubnerpages in which Victor describes the reigns of Aurelian to Diocletian has left its traces in the *HA* either as a model of expression or as the starting point for a short essay, a speech or a letter. Again, this applies both to Victor's statements of fact and to his numerous generalizing and moralizing remarks. The introduction to the *Tacitus* is of course inspired by Victor's remark (*Caes.* 35.12) quoted above. Now Victor draws two conclusions from this comparison, first that the course of history is cyclic, *Caes.* 35.13-4: *quod factum praecipue edocuit cuncta in se orbis modo verti, nihilque accidere quod rursum naturae vis ferre nequeat aevi spatio*. Second (*adhuc*) that as the virtues of the emperors may save the state even in a desperate situation, so their vices may be its undoing: *virtutibus principum res attolli facile vel afflictas, easque firmiores praeceps vitiis dari*. It is my impression that the latter *sententia* has provided the point of departure for the speculations in the preface to the Carus on the ups and downs in Roman history.

Another peculiarity of the *vita Taciti* are the repeated closing statements in chs. 14 and 16, after which the author coolly proceeds with fresh information. This stop-go method is found in several other lives in the *HA*, the prime examples being the *Commodus*, the *Avidius Cassius*, *Clodius Albinus* and *Diadumenus*. A precedent had been set by Marius Maximus, as we are told in *P* 15.8: *horruisse autem illum imperium epistula docet, quae vitae illius a Mario Maximo apposita est*. Leo (1901, 297-300), in his study of the biography, came up with the surprising parallel of Diogenes Laertius, in whose lives subsequent stages of composition and amplification can be distinguished. In Diogenes we find, as in the lives I mentioned just now, letters appended to the *vitae* proper based on material from the lives themselves, fiction comparable to the letters at the end of the *vita Taciti*, but also appendices of a more erudite nature, as in the life of Zeno, providing technical information with detailed references to the sources consulted. Both these characteristics of Diogenes' lives are present in the *HA*, with this difference that the scholarly appendices after the manner of Diogenes are imitated or

parodied in the *HA* as forms without substance, *verba sine re*.

Now let us look more closely at the text of the first chapter, to get an idea of the way in which the author composed sentence by sentence. He leads off with an unusually complicated period, which, stripped to its essentials, reads as follows: *quod factum pontifices in litteras rettulerunt, id factum est*. The repetition of *factum*, instead of a synonym like *evenit*, *accidit* betrays an *inopia verborum* of which there are more examples in the following documents. The sentence as a whole is inspired by Victor's *quod factum edocuit* (35.13), immediately following the remark about the *interregnum* after Aurelian. With the prepositional phrase *post excessum Romuli* Magie compared Cic. *Rep.* 2.23: *videtisne igitur unius viri consilio non solum ortum novum populum neque ut in incunabulis vagientem relictum, set adultum iam et paene puberem?* and 2.52 *post obitum vel potius excessum Romuli*. I am inclined to think that the historical survey in the second book of the *Respublica* is an additional source for this essay, and that a text like 2.23 *ergo, inquit Scipio, cum ille Romuli senatus ... temptaret post Romuli excessum ut ipse gereret sine rege rem publicam, ...* had a special appeal to our author. If this is correct, it might help to explain the striking phrase *novello Romanae urbis imperio*. *Novellus* is normally used of small children or young animals. The sentimental adjective has been suggested, I suppose, by Cicero's personification of the Roman people in 2.21. Victor's *utrimque pudore et modestia certabatur* (Caes. 35.11) is blown up by redoubling to *non invidio non tristi, sed grato religiosoque certamine*. *Modestia*, by the way, returns in the startling phrase 9.1 *digna vobis, digna modesto exercitu, digna populo Romano*.

The second section develops Victor's *longe vera gloriosior*. One gets the impression that the author started from Eutropius *Brev.* 2.3 *deinde Romae per quinos dies senatores imperaverunt et his regnantibus annus unus completus est*, in combination with the number of senators, given in 2.1 as a hundred and that he tried to harmonize these data, by reducing the number of days (*per quinos et quaternos dies sive ternos*), while at the same time insisting that the *interregnum* must have lasted longer than a year to give every senator a chance to be *interrex*. The alternative introduced by *sive* 'erweckt den Schein exakteren Wissens', to quote Kolb (1972, 18), speaking about similar procedures in dealing with the text of Herodian. One would expect, in a discussion that begins with *multis modis separata est*, that *huc accedit* would introduce a further difference, but no, the author simply means to say that also during the Republic *interregnum* implied that there was an *interrex*, or rather in-

terreges. The last two sections of the first chapter are very amusing. The author knows about the *solitudo magistratuum* in the 370s BC (it happens to be in Eutropius, 2.3). Even in those years there was no ἀναρχία, since there were *tribuni plebis*, powerful magistrates, who held the *tribunicia potestas, maxima pars regalis imperi*, ‘expression alambiquée et tautologique’, according to Béranger (1980, 14), who commented on this passage. And so, by a process of redoubling and repetition, adding reminiscences from other authors, introducing scholarly asides on real or invented problems, the author has managed to blow up Victor’s sentence of ten words to the size of a Teubner page.

Finally, a word on the senate meeting described in chs. 3-7, that ends the *interregnum*. It takes place in the *curia Pompiliana*, as did the meeting after Aurelian’s death in A 41. No such building is on record. The name is, of course, a playful variation on *curia Hostilia*. Why did the author give this name to the senate building in these two places (and nowhere else)? The answer is: to evoke king Numa Pompilius. In a recent article Brandt (1988) has studied the role of Numa in Late Antiquity and especially in the *HA*. The emperor Tacitus is not mentioned in that article, although the reader of the *HA* is certainly expected to think of him. In case we should miss the reference contained in the name of the *curia*, the association is repeated in the acclamations registered in 5.1: *et tu legisti: ‘Incanaque menta regis Romani?’*, the words by which Anchises in Verg. A. 6.809-10 indicates Numa. And indeed, once Aurelian has been equated with Romulus, his successor after the *interregnum* can only be associated with Numa. It is tempting to pursue the analogy a little further. Just as Numa’s reign was beneficial in that it civilized the belligerent Romans, so the reign of the venerable and erudite Tacitus brought relief after the harsh Aurelian, *princeps necessarius magis quam bonus* (A 37.1). Both Numa and Tacitus were in their turn succeeded by warlike princes. In that respect too, they were real *interreges*. But the *HA* does not develop this theme. I must therefore resist the temptation to embroider on my source, a temptation to which our author always yielded with such gusto.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

‘THE PLATO OF POETS’ *Vergil in the Historia Augusta*

Just as in many other literary works in late antiquity, in the *Historia Augusta* Vergil is frequently quoted and alluded to. References to and quotations from Vergil are unevenly distributed, and this distribution is related to the complicated genesis of the heterogeneous collection.¹ The reader of the *HA* cannot fail to notice that there are striking differences in style and composition in particular between the lives of the great emperors of the second century, up to and including Caracalla, the so-called ‘primary lives’ (*Hauptviten*), and those of princes and usurpers of the same period, the ‘secondary lives’ (*Nebenviten*). It is also evident that many of the typical traits of these secondary lives are shared by the lives that go under the names of Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus (Gallienus – Numerianus). For the primary lives the author obviously had an excellent source at his disposal; in the secondary lives and the lives that go under the name of Pollio and Vopiscus he relies to a large extent on his own *inventio*. Attention therefore has to be given to the context in which we find reminiscences or quotations from Vergil, in order to decide whether the author had found them in his sources or added them as an embellishment of his text or for special emphasis.

Explicit references to Vergil

In the life of the exemplary emperor Alexander Severus we read that he had a portrait of Vergil in one of his two private sanctuaries: *Vergilium autem Platonem poetarum vocabat² eiusque imaginem cum Ciceronis simulacro in secundo larario habebat, ubi et Achillis et magnorum viro- rum* (AS 31.4).³ This respect for the poet as a repository of wisdom is

¹ See for this question chapter 14 of this book, ‘The Discussion of Authorship’.

² I have found no exact parallel for this designation of Vergil, but ὁ σοφώτατε ποιητὰ Μάρων (‘Maro, wisest of poets’) in Constantine’s *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum* comes close. It is modelled on expressions concerning Plato himself, like *deus philosophorum*, *Homerus philosophorum* (‘the god, the Homer of Philosophers’), for which see Pease (1955, 1958); Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.32.

³ ‘he used to call Vergil the Plato of poets and he kept his portrait, together with a like-

typical of the nostalgic admiration of classical literature in late antiquity, exemplified by Macrobius, in whose works Vergil, *quem constat erroris ignarum* (*Somn.* 2.8.8)⁴ is celebrated as a sage rather than an artist. In the *HA* serious study of Vergil and other classical authors is a characteristic of a good emperor (cf. Rösger 1976, 9-18). In this respect the elder Gordian resembled Alexander Severus: *hac enim vita venerabilis, cum Platone semper, cum Aristotele, cum Tullio, cum Vergilio ceterisque veteribus agens* (*Gd.* 7.1).⁵ This emperor is even reported to have written an epic poem himself in thirty books on the Antonini as a young boy (*puerulus*).⁶ By contrast, a lighthearted prince like Aelius, Hadrian's adopted son, studied Apicius and Ovid's *Amores* and called Martial *suum Vergilium* ('his own Vergil', *Ael.* 5.9).

Vergil is mentioned by name only four more times in the *HA*.⁷ The first instance is what one would expect in a biography, a remark on the literary taste of the emperor, in the style of Suetonius.⁸ In the archaizing fashion of his contemporaries Hadrian 'preferred Ennius to Vergil, Cato to Cicero and Coelius to Sallust' (*H* 16.6). The remaining three are more typical for the *HA*. In *AS* 21.2 Vergil is mentioned in a digression on the sons of great men, rulers and writers: *iam vero quid de Homero, Demosthene, Vergilio, Crispo et Terentio, Plauto ceterisque aliis loquar?*⁹ This is part of a notorious insertion by the author into the main body of the life, which underlines the necessity to look at the distribution of the references to Vergil over the *HA* as a whole. Secondly, in *AS* 14.5 we are told that Alexander Severus, at the instance of his father, turned away

ness of Cicero, in his second sanctuary of the Lares, where he also had portraits of Achilles and the great heroes'. Unless stated otherwise, the English translations are taken, with slight adaptations, from the Loeb editions.

⁴ 'who was, as everyone knows, never mistaken'.

⁵ 'worthy of respect as such a life had made him, he passed his days with Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Vergil and the other ancient authors'.

⁶ *Gd.* 3.2 *scripsit praeterea, quemadmodum Vergilius Aeneidos et Statius Achilleidas et multi alii Alexandridos (Alexandriados?), ita etiam ille Antoniniados* ('Besides these, just as Vergil wrote an Aeneid, Statius an *Achilleid* and many others *Alexandriads*, he wrote an *Antoniniad*). In *ThLL* II 189.63 this term is mistaken for a genitive (sc. *carmen*). The author must have thought *Antoniniados* was a patronymic of the type *Memmiades*.

⁷ See the Index Nominum in Hohl's Teubner edition. Under the name of Vergil Hohl also gives the references to the *Aeneid*. The list is not complete. See also Velaza (1996, 305), who adds *A.* 1.381 (*PN* 8.6), but omits 7.654 (*OM* 12.9). Velaza has studied the text of the quotations in the *HA* from Vergil. He concludes that it is closest to F (Vaticanus Latinus 3225) and P (Vaticanus Palatinus Latinus 1631).

⁸ *H* 16.6: *Ciceroni Catonem, Vergilio Ennium, Sallustio Coelium praetulit*.

⁹ 'what shall I say of Homer, Demosthenes, Vergil, Crispus, Terentius, Plautus and such as they?'

from philosophy and music to other arts. Which arts were meant, is made clear by the *sortes Vergilii* he was honoured with. They are among the most famous verses of the *Aeneid*: *excudent alii ... / tu regere imperio populos Romane memento / hae tibi erunt artes* (A. 6.847-52).¹⁰ This raises the question of the *sortes Vergilianae* (or *Vergilii*), an expression found only in the *HA*, although the practice of consulting poets for divinatory purposes, *rhapsodomanteia*, is also known from other sources. Finally, in *Max.* 27.4 we are informed that Fabillus, the teacher of Maximinus iunior, translated *Aeneid* 8.589-91 into Greek verses. Translations from Latin to Greek and vice versa are a recurrent feature in the *HA*, which deserves special attention.

Sortes Vergilianae

‘The random consultation for mantic purposes of a poet or other revered author’ is Pease’s definition of the technique called *rhapsodomanteia*.¹¹ To this end especially Homer, Vergil and the Bible were consulted. The practice is best known from Augustine, who quotes a respected medical doctor as saying *de paginis poetae cuiuspiam longe aliud canentis atque intendentis, cum forte quis consulit, mirabiliter consonus negotio saepe versus exiret* (*Conf.* 4.3.5).¹² Augustine disapproved of the use of the Bible for such trivial purposes, although he preferred it to pagan forms of divination: *hi vero, qui de paginis evangelicis sortes legunt, etsi optandum est, ut hoc potius faciant, quam ad daemonia consulenda concurrant, tamen etiam ista mihi displicet consuetudo, ad negotia saecularia et ad vitae huius vanitatem propter aliam vitam loquentia oracula divina velle convertere* (*Ep.* 55.20).¹³ It is not just the trivial character of the information required that is condemned by Augustine, but more gener-

¹⁰ ‘Others, doubt not, shall beat out ... you, Roman, be sure to rule the world, be these your arts’.

¹¹ Pease 1920, 1923 on. Cic. *Div.* 1.12; the note provides an excellent introduction to this form of divination. See further Bouché-Leclercq 1882, IV 145-59 and for modern literature De Kisch 1970, 324 n.1, but above all Courcelle 1952 and 1963, 143-63. De Kisch does mention Courcelle’s article *Divinatio* in *RAC*, but he seems to have missed Courcelle’s fundamental studies on the ‘*Tolle, lege*’ episode in *Conf.* Cf. Klingshirn 2002.

¹² ‘although the poet had been thinking, as he wrote, of some quite different matter, it often happened that the reader placed his finger on a verse which had a remarkable bearing on his problem’ (translation Pine-Coffin).

¹³ ‘as to those, who take *sortes* from the pages of the evangelists, although it is preferable for them to do this rather than to consult the heathen gods, still I disapprove of that practice, to try to adapt to worldly affairs and the vanity of this life the words of God that are spoken

ally the fact that a meaning is elicited from lines taken out of context that was not intended by the author. This point is made more clearly in *De Civitate Dei*: *ne more centonum ad rem quam volumus tamquam versiculos decerpere videamur velut de grandi carmine, quod non de re illa, sed de alia longeque diversa; reperiatur esse conscriptum* (17.15).¹⁴ This is what the consultation of texts for divinatory purposes and the composition of *centos* have in common: lines and verses are taken out of context and given an entirely new meaning never envisaged by the original author. Both procedures are found in the *HA*.

Different ways of consulting *sortes* are on record. At the shrine of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste, which is mentioned in *AS* 4.6, lots were drawn from a box (*area*) by a young child (cf. *Cic. Div.* 2.86). In other instances the lots were shaken in a receptacle until one of them fell out.¹⁵ Another method, not mentioned in the *HA*, is the *apertio libri*, the random opening of a book, most famously attested in the 'Tolle, lege' episode in Augustine *Confessions* 8.12.29.¹⁶ Yet another method is known from the so-called *sortes Astrampsychi*.¹⁷ There we find a list of questions with a number attached to each of them. This number led the consultant indirectly to a list of responses from which he could choose his answer.

The *sortes Vergilianae* are mentioned for the first time in *H* 2.8: Hadrian, anxious to know if he was still Trajan's favourite for the succession, consulted the *sortes*. He received the following oracle (*A.* 6.808-12):

in view of another life', my translation. In Graham Greene's novel *Travels with My Aunt* the narrator, Henry Pulling, relates how his father used to consult the works of Sir Walter Scott for playing the *Sortes* – 'a game my mother considered a little blasphemous unless it was played with the Bible.' See Katz 1994, 258.

¹⁴ 'Otherwise I fear that I might seem to be gathering individual verses on the topic in hand, in the technique of the *centos* when one makes selections from a long poem not Written on the same subject, but on another and totally different one'. A similar criticism is voiced by Jerome in a letter to Paulinus of Nola, 53.7, where he speaks of people who *nec scire dignantur quid prophetae, quid apostoli senserint, sed ... ad voluntatem suam scripturam trahere repugnantem* ('who do not deign to know what the prophets and the apostles thought ... but adapt the bible against its intention to their own ends.' Jerome goes on to speak about *Homerocentones* and *Vergiliocentones*, my translation). Cf. Pollmann above.

¹⁵ The procedure is already described in Homer (*Il.* 3.316, *Od.* 10.206-7). In the *HA* itself we find it in *Pr.* 8.4.

¹⁶ As Dessau (1892, 583) remarks in passing, this procedure is difficult to imagine with the *volumen*; a *codex* is much better suited to this purpose.

¹⁷ The *sortes Astrampsychi* are a collection of oracles probably dating from the third century. For a detailed description see Björck (1939).

*quis procul ille autem ramis insignis olivae
sacra ferens? nosco crines incanaque menta
regis Romani, primum qui legibus urbem
fundabit, Curibus parvis et paupere terra
missus in imperium magnum, cui deinde subibit.*¹⁸

The manner in which Hadrian consulted the *sortes* is not specified, neither is the location where the consultation took place. Taken literally, the formula *sors excidit* ('the lot fell out') following the quotation suggests that lots were shaken in a receptacle, until one of them was thrown out. The author would have us believe that the lines from Anchises' great speech in book 6 of the *Aeneid*, the 'Heldenschau', in which king Numa is introduced, were written on such a lot. This seems highly unlikely and it is preferable to interpret the words less literally in the sense of *sors contigit* ('the lot was granted to him'). The author proceeds: *quam alii ex Sibyllinis versibus ei provenisse dicunt*.¹⁹ Again, taken literally, this would mean that the passage from Vergil was found in the Sibylline verses. Such a fantastic notion would not be beyond the power of invention of the author, as is proved by *PN* 8.6, where a line from Vergil is passed off as a translation of an oracle delivered in Greek by the Pythia. But a less literal interpretation of the phrase would be that, according to some, Hadrian found the prediction of his future reign not in Vergil, but in the Sibylline books.²⁰ The *Oracula Sibyllina* do indeed contain a number of references to this emperor, in which, moreover, he is described as 'silver-haired' (*arguroukranos*) which tallies with Vergil's *incanaque menta*, 'his hoary beard'.²¹ Still, the connection between Vergil and the Sibylline verses deserves special attention. The association of ideas may have been inspired by the central role played by the Sibyl in book 6, from which the quotation was taken, or from the *Cumaeum carmen* of the fourth *Eclogue*. According to Lactantius and

¹⁸ 'But who is he apart, crowned with sprays of olive / offering sacrifice? I recognise the hoary hair and beard / of that king of Rome who will make the infant city / secure on a basis of laws, called from the needy land / of lowly Cures to sovereign might.' In all probability the author regarded the quoted lines as a finished sentence, in which *cui* referred to *imperium* rather than to *regis Romani*. It is therefore misleading to end the quotation at *imperium magnum*, as Zoepffel (1978) does. Naturally, Hadrian interpreted the lines as a prediction of his future reign.

¹⁹ 'others, however, declare that this prophecy came to him from the Sibylline verses'

²⁰ The literal interpretation is favoured by Dessau 1892, 582; Casaubonus in his note ad loc. in his Paris edition of 1603 prefers the latter interpretation.

²¹ e.g. *Orac. Sib.* 5.46-50, 8.50-9, 12.163-75. See Callu 1992 ad loc. and in particular Zoepffel 1978, 394 n.16 and 425-7.

Augustine, the prophecy in this poem had simply been taken over by Vergil from the Sibylline verses. Lactantius remarks after a lengthy quotation from the fourth *Eclogue*: *quae poeta secundum Cymaeae Sibyllae carmina prolocutus est* (*Div. inst.* 7.24.12).²² Augustine was of the same opinion: *quod ex Cymaeo, id est Sibyllino carmine se fassus est transtulisse Vergilius* (*Ep.* 258.5).²³ This may seem to be a far cry from the text under consideration, but, as we will see, there may be more similarities with Christian authors in the context of the *sortes*.

The quotation from Vergil is inserted into a highly informative section of the life of Hadrian, where the author closely follows his source, commonly identified as Marius Maximus.²⁴ The question whether the author adopted the quotation from this source does not admit of an easy answer. As Zoepffel observes, the sentence preceding it seems to imply that Hadrian was worried about Trajan's feelings toward him, so that the consultation of an oracle in any form would follow naturally.²⁵ On the other hand, the alternative of the Sibylline verses and the unattested Apollonius Syrus Platonius are clearly in the style of the author as we know it from the secondary lives and the lives in the last part of the *HA*. For the moment I would prefer to see in this passage an embellishment by the author of his source to which he returns in §10 (*denique statim suffragante Sura ad amicitiam Traiani pleniorē redit*).²⁶ The return may be marked by the words *ut Marius Maximus dicit* ('as Marius Maximus tells us').

Quotations in the secondary lives: Ael., PN, CIA

Vergil is introduced again in the life of Aelius, Hadrian's intended successor. It is one of the 'secondary lives', which differ from the main lives of the great emperors of the second century in that the author has little

²² 'the poet has spoken these words in accordance with the verses of the Cumaean Sibyl'.

²³ 'Vergil has openly declared that he had taken this prophecy from the Cumaean, i.e. the Sibyl's song'. Cf. also *Ep.* 104.11 *nam utique hoc non a se ipso se dixisse Vergilius in eclogae ipsius quarto ferme versu indicat, ubi ait ... unde hoc a Cumaea Sibylla dictum esse incunctanter apparet* ('for no doubt Vergil himself indicates himself in about the fourth verse of his *Eclogue* that he has not sung these words by himself ... this proves plainly that this has been sung by the Cumaean Sibyl'). See Guillaumin 1978, 191 and Wlosok 1983, 71.

²⁴ For recent literature on the vexed problem of Marius Maximus, see Paschoud 1994.

²⁵ Zoepffel 1978, 293; unfortunately the sentence is incomplete. It is impossible to assess the extent of the lacuna.

²⁶ 'finally, through the good offices of Sura, he was instantly restored to a friendship with Trajan that was closer than ever'.

information to offer and therefore resorts to different forms of *mythistoria* in the form of prefaces, dedications, fake documents and programmatic statements. In *Ael.* 4 we are told that Hadrian, an expert astrologer, who knew that Aelius did not have long to live, used to say about him:

*ostendent terris hunc tantum fata neque ultra
esse sinent.
quos versus cum aliquando in hortulo spatians cantitaret, atque adesset
unus ex litteratis, quorum Hadrianus speciosa societate gaudebat, velletque
addere:
nimium vobis Romana propago
visa potens, superi, propria haec si dona fuissent,
Hadrianus dixisse fertur 'hos versus vita non capit Veri', illud addens:
manibus date lilia plenis;
purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis
his saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani
munere.²⁷*

Again the author uses the 'Heldenschau' for his own ends. The seemingly otiose detail that Hadrian sung these verses while walking in his garden deserves special attention. It calls to mind the most famous instance of *sortilegium* in classical literature, the *Tolle, lege* episode in Augustine's *Confessions* 8. That scene is also set in a garden: *hortulus quidam erat hospitii nostri ... abscessi ergo in hortum et Alypius pedem post pedem* (8.8.19).²⁸ His friend Alypius, who accompanied him may without exaggeration be called one of the *litterati* in Augustine's circle of friends. Just as Hadrian is singing the verses from the *Aeneid*, Augustine hears *vocem de vicina domo cum cantu dicentis et crebro repetentis quasi pueri aut puellae, nescio*.²⁹ Moreover, just as the *litteratus* in Hadrian's company continues the quotation by Hadrian, Alypius sees a personal

²⁷ 'only a glimpse of him will fate give earth, nor suffer him to stay' (Verg. *A.* 6.869-70). And once when Hadrian was singing (or 'reciting') these verses while strolling about in his garden, one of the literary men, in whose brilliant company he delighted, happened to be present and proceeded to add, 'Too powerful, O gods above, you deemed the Roman people, had these gifts of yours been lasting' (*A.* 6.870-1). Thereupon the emperor remarked, it is said: 'the life of Verus will not admit of these lines,' and added: 'Grant me to scatter in handfuls lilies of purple blossom, to heap at least these gifts on my descendant's shade and perform an unavailing duty' (*A.* 6.883-6).

²⁸ 'there was a small garden attached to the house where we lodged ... So I went out into the garden and Alypius followed at my heels'.

²⁹ 'a voice from a nearby house, as if it had been of a boy or girl, I cannot say, in a sing-song voice saying and often repeating'.

relevance in the verse in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (13.14) that comes immediately after the verse that led to Augustine’s conversion. It would be rash to assert on the basis of these similarities between the two episodes that the author of the *HA* had the story of Augustine’s conversion in mind when he wrote this passage. The warning at the end of Syme’s *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* must always be kept in mind: ‘To be much in the company of the *Historia Augusta* is to risk the fatal exhilaration that befell the guests of Africanus, *poculis amplioribus madefacti*’ (1968, 220). Still, in view of the mounting evidence that the author was familiar with Christian literature, especially the work of Jerome,³⁰ correspondences like these should be registered carefully. Isolated instances may not carry conviction; taken together they provide cumulative evidence that cannot be ignored.

The next flight of fancy to be admired is in chapter 8 of the Life of Pescennius Niger, again one of the secondary lives. Pescennius is one of the two rivals of Septimius Severus, the other one being Clodius Albinus. The priest of Apollo at Delphi, when asked who would be the next emperor gave the following answer, *PN* 8.3:

*fundetur sanguis albi nigrique animantis
imperium mundi Poena reget urbe profectus.* ³¹

As Dessau saw, the second verse with its prediction of Severus’ victory is modelled upon *A.* 1.340: *imperium Dido Tyria regit urbe profecta*.³² The author takes the liberty to adapt Vergil’s text to his own purposes. This is continued in the next oracle. The priest responded in the following words to the question how long Severus’ reign would last (in Greek, as we are explicitly told: *respondisse Graeco versu dicitur*), *PN* 8.6:

*bis denis Italum conscendit navibus aequor
si tamen una ratis transiliet pelagus.* ³³

Dessau duly noted that the first line, with its prediction of Severus’ twenty-year reign, was based on *Aeneid* 1.381: *bis denis Phrygium con-*

³⁰ Paschoud 2001, 179.

³¹ ‘both of the Black and the White shall the life-blood be shed; / empire over the world shall be held by the native of Carthage’.

³² Dessau 1918, 391. ‘Dido, who came from the city of Tyre, wields the sceptre’.

³³ ‘in twice ten ships he will cleave the Italian waters / if only one of his barques will bound over the sea.’

scendi navibus aequor ('with twice ten ships I embarked on the Phrygian sea'). He might have added that the second line is a variation on Horace *Odes* 1.3.23-4: *si tamen impiae / non tangenda rates transiliunt vada* ('If in spite, of him the impious ships dash across the depths he meant not to be touched').³⁴ This is the first specimen of centonisation and the only example of contamination with other poets. The whole procedure calls to mind the scornful passage in Cicero *De divinatione* 2.116:

*quis enim est qui credat Apollinis ex oraculo Pyrrho esse responsum:
Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse?
Primum Latine Apollo numquam locutus est; deinde ista sors inaudita
Graecis est; praeterea Pyrrhi temporibus iam Apollo versus facere
desierat.*³⁵

The companion piece to the *PN* is *CLA*. The author does not have much real information about this usurper, so he has recourse to his usual tricks, fake documents, an address to the emperor Constantine this time – and *omina*. In *CLA* 5.1 we read that Albinus was a bellicose and arrogant general:

*nam fertur in scholis saepissime cantasse inter puerolos:
arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis
repetens:
arma amens capio.*³⁶

One of the predictions of his reign is described as follows: Clodius went

³⁴ The interpretation of the line from Horace, more specifically of *tamen*, in the new context is far from clear. In Horace *tamen* expresses the contrast between the ordinance of Jupiter and the disobedience of men. In the oracle concocted by the author of the *HA* *tamen* can only be understood as a proviso: Severus' reign will last twenty years, provided he manages to bring one year to an end, i.e. provided he succeeds in disposing of his rivals. If this is what the author intended to say, he would have done better to change the perfect *conscondi* to the future *conscondet*, which is the reading of S. But it is entirely possible that he could not be bothered.

³⁵ 'Who would believe that Apollo's oracle gave the following response to Pyrrhus: "O son of Aeacus, my prediction is that you the Roman army will defeat." In the first place Apollo never spoke in Latin; second, that oracle is unknown to the Greeks; third, in the days of Pyrrhus Apollo had already ceased making verses'.

³⁶ 'for at school, it is said, he used often to recite to the children: "Frantic I seize arms: yet little purpose is there in arms." And he repeated again and again the words "Frantic I seize arms."' (A. 2.314).

to the temple of Apollo in Cumae to consult the god about his fate:

*cum illic sortem de fato suo tolleret, his versibus eidem dicitur esse
responsum:*

*hic rem Romanam magno turbante tumultu
sistet eques, sternet Poenos Gallumque rebellem.*³⁷

The technical expression *sortem tollere* is used incorrectly here. Drawing lots was not the procedure followed at Cumae, but in the temple of Fortuna at Praeneste, as described in Cicero *De divinatione* 2.86: *sortis, quae hodie Fortunae monitu tolluntur*.³⁸ For the use of epic verse by an oracle, we find striking parallels in Cassius Dio, who tells us that Caracalla, when still an ordinary citizen, received an oracle in the sanctuary of Baal-Zeus at Apamea predicting his future reign in verses taken from the *Iliad* (79.8.6). The same happened later in the same shrine to Macrinus.³⁹

Quotations in OM and Dd.

The life of the emperor Macrinus opens with a programmatic preface in which the author states his intention to write the lives of little-known rulers; *vitae illorum principum seu tyrannorum sive Caesarum, qui non diu imperarunt*.⁴⁰ The reliable source which he had followed for the great emperors of the second century had clearly run out and the preface marks the beginning of a new section of the *HA*. The life of the short-lived emperor Macrinus contains two short poems that have been translated, clumsily as the author says himself, into Greek. There are also two lines from Vergil, sung by the people when Macrinus' son Diadumenianus entered the circus in honour of his beauty and at the same time to discredit his father (*OM* 12.7):

³⁷ 'when he made inquiry of the oracle there concerning his fate, he received a response, it is said, in the following lines: "When the Roman state is reeling under a brutal shock, he will steady it, will ride down Carthaginians and the insurgent Gaul"' (A. 6.857-8).

³⁸ 'At the present time, the lots are taken from the receptacle, if Fortuna directs.' More examples in Courcelle 1952, 183 n.55.

³⁹ 79.40.4, 'upon his consulting the oracle of Zeus Belus the god had answered him: "Truly indeed, old man, young warriors sorely beset thee, spent is thy force, and grievous old age is coming upon thee"' (*Il.* 8.102-3).

⁴⁰ 'The lives of such emperors, usurpers or Caesars, as held their throne for no long time'.

*egregius forma iuuenis,
cui pater haud Mezentius esset.* ⁴¹

another example of centonisation, in which A. 6.861 (*egregium forma iuuenem*, about Marcellus) is joined to 7.654 (about Lausus).

In agreement with this announcement, the author provides a biography of Macrinus' son, whom he calls Diadumenus, although his real name was Diadumenianus. Hardly anything is known about this boy, who was killed at the age of ten, one month after he had been made an Augustus. The author manages to write a short life only by elaborating the theme of the *nomen Antoninorum*, the praise of the emperors who bore that name (which had been adopted by Diadumenianus) and by inserting speeches and letters. In one of these letters (*Dd.* 8.5-8) the young prince protests against the clemency of his father towards insurgents. He embellishes the letter with a quotation from Vergil:

*si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum,
Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli
respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus
debetur.* ⁴²

The quotation is well chosen to convince Macrinus that the interest of his son must prevail over any inclination to clemency. According to some, we are informed, the letter was written, not by the young prince himself, but by one Caelianus, a former rhetor from Africa.

Quotations in AS

As we said at the beginning, in the *HA* Alexander Severus is depicted as the ideal emperor. In chapter 4 the young emperor is described as beloved by all. He was called *pius*, *sanctus* and *utilis rei publicae*. When his life was threatened by his predecessor Heliogabalus, he received this oracle in the shrine of Fortuna in Praeneste:

⁴¹ 'A youth of passing beauty, / not deserving to have as his father Mezentius'.

⁴² 'If the glory of such a fortune does not stir you, / have regard for growing Ascanius, the promise of Iulus your heir, / to whom the kingdom of Italy and the Roman lands are due' (*A.* 4. 272-6). Line 273 is omitted in accordance with the primary mss.

*si qua fata aspera rumpas
tu Marcellus eris.*⁴³

Again the oracle is taken from the ‘Heldenschau’, a passage which the author must have known by heart and to which he will return several times in the sequel.⁴⁴ As Marcellus forms the culmination of the ‘Heldenschau’, the quotation marks Alexander as the emperor par excellence.

Two long chapters (13-14) are devoted to his *omina imperii*. In chapter 14 we are told that both his mother and his father received unmistakable signs of the future greatness of their son. The author continues:

*ipse cum vatem consuleret de futuris, hos accepisse dicitur versus adhuc
parvulus et primum quidem sortibus: ‘te manet imperium caeli terraeque’
intellectum est, quod inter divos etiam referetur. ‘te manet imperium, quod
tenet imperium’, ex quo intellectum est Romani illum imperii principem
futurum; nam ubi est imperium nisi apud Romanos, quod tenet imperium?
et haec quidem de Graecis versibus prodita ... inlustratus est Vergilii
sortibus huius modi:*

*excudent alii spirantia mollius aera,
credo equidem, et vivos ducent de marmore vultus,
orabunt causas melius caelique meatus
describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.
hae tibi erunt artes pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.*⁴⁵

The passage deserves to be quoted in full, because it is in many ways characteristic of the author’s method. First we have two lines that are

⁴³ ‘Could you but shatter the cruel barrier of fate! / You are to be Marcellus’ (A. 6.882-3). Bouché-Leclercq IV, 153 must have had this passage in mind when he wrote: ‘À un moment où l’*Énéide* passait moins pour un chef-d’œuvre humain que pour un livre inspiré et où les sorts virgiliens étaient à la mode, la Fortune se servit, pour répondre des vers de Virgile.’

⁴⁴ He evidently interprets the *si*-clause as conditional rather than as a wish, as it must certainly be taken in the original context. It is impossible to decide if this is how he read Vergil’s text, or whether he adapts it to the new context: ‘if you escape the threat from Heligabalus, you will live to be a Marcellus.’

⁴⁵ A. 6.847-53. ‘And when Alexander himself consulted a prophet about his future, being still a small child, he received, it is said, the following verses, at first from the *sortes*: “Thee doth empire await on earth and in heaven.” It was understood that he was even to have a place among the deified emperors; then came “Thee doth empire await which rules an empire”, by which it was understood that he should become ruler of the Roman empire; for where, save at Rome, is there imperial power that rules an empire? And these prophecies

said to be translated from Greek, which is a sure sign that the author made them up himself.⁴⁶ The first one is an incomplete hexameter, in which the sixth foot is missing. Casaubonus duly supplied *marisque* ('and the sea'). But the point of the line is made as it stands, as the author explains himself: Alexander Severus will be deified after his death. The idea of a ruler who is promised a reign in heaven is of course familiar from the fourth *Eclogue* and the proemium to the *Georgics*, but it is not superfluous to note that *imperium caeli terraeque* is a unique phrase,⁴⁷ so that Straub's comparison with *Matthew 28.18: data mihi est omnis potestas in caelo et in terra*⁴⁸ does not seem too fanciful. Those words were spoken by Christ after his Resurrection, just as Alexander will receive his *imperium caeli* after his death.⁴⁹ The next *sors* is in the form of a pentameter. The question is whether it is just a *lusus verborum* on two different meanings of the word *imperium*,⁵⁰ or another allusion to a biblical text, as Straub has argued. Before entering into his argument, we must again realise that the seemingly innocuous phrase *te manet imperium, quod tenet imperium* is highly unusual. The first *imperium* means 'imperial power', the second 'empire'. Now the expression *imperium tenere* is common enough with a personal agent as its subject,⁵¹ but an abstract noun as subject of *tenere imperium* is again without parallel – reason enough to look closely at other cases in which *imperium* and *tenere* are linked. Straub has pointed to Christian speculations about *II Thessalonians 2.6*, in which the Apostle refers ob-

came to him in Greek verses. ... He was honoured by verses from the *sortes Vergilianae*: "Others, I doubt not, shall with softer mould beat out the breathing bronze, / coax from the marble features to the life / plead causes with more eloquence and with a pointer trace / heaven's motions and predict the rising of the stars. / You, Roman, be sure to rule the world (be these your arts) / to crown peace with justice, to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud"

⁴⁶ Casaubonus in the note ad loc. translated them back for the benefit of his readers, but as we have seen, the author does not hesitate to present quotations from Latin poets as translations. Apart from *PN* 8.6, discussed above, we have *OM* 14.2:

centum nam moechos passa est centumque rogavit.

ipse etiam calvus moechus fuit, inde maritus

('Lovers a hundred she knew and a hundred were those whom she courted

Lover was also the bald head, who later was known as her husband'),

in which we have a centonisation of *Cat.* 11.16–17 and *Suet. Caes.* 51. See also Straub 1963, 150, n. 70 and Baldwin 1978.

⁴⁷ I found no parallel in the CD-Rom containing the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*, nor in the *ThLL* s.v. *imperium*.

⁴⁸ 'All power in heaven and earth was given to me'.

⁴⁹ For a full discussion see Straub 1963, 149–63.

⁵⁰ So the *ThLL* VII 1.580.31.

⁵¹ e.g. *Verg. A.* 1.236 (*Romanos*) *qui mare, qui terras omnis dicione tenerent* ('[The Romans] who were to hold all sea and land under their sway').

scurely τὸ κατέχον 'that which detains', which prevents the Antichrist from coming, after whom Christ will return for the Last Judgment. He quotes passages from Tertullian, Lactantius, Augustine and Jerome to show that they interpreted τὸ κατέχον as the *imperium Romanum* and translated κατέχειν with *detinere*, c.q. *tenere*.⁵² The problem is, however, that in the text from the New Testament and in the interpretations by Latin Christian writers, the verb κατέχειν, c.q. *tenere* / *detinere* are used absolutely and that the Antichrist must be supplied as its object, whereas in the text under discussion *tenere* has *imperium* in the sense of 'empire' as its object. For that reason there is, in my opinion, no compelling reason to interpret AS 14.4 as an allusion to these eschatological Christian views.

On the other hand, the insistence that by 'empire' the Roman empire must be meant is puzzling. It is unlikely that anyone in the early days of Alexander would have expected otherwise. In the period, however, in which the *HA* was given its final form, that is to say well after the battle of Adrianople, confidence had been shaken and the future of the empire did seem to be in danger.⁵³ In that context an assurance such as is given in the present holds a message for the contemporary reader not to despair of the situation. There is no alternative world power to take over from Rome and the end of Rome is not approaching. And here Vergil is introduced to drive the message home. The proud and classical assertion that it is Rome's mission to rule the world in what are probably the most quoted lines in the *Aeneid* crowns this passage that began with doggerel of the author's own making.

Again we are forced to think of Augustine, who on the first page of his *De civitate Dei* challenged Vergil's proud proclamation. *Rex enim et conditor civitatis huius ... in scriptura populi sui sententiam divinae legis aperuit, qua dictum est: Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam*.⁵⁴

⁵² e.g. Augustine *De civ. D.* 20.19.3 *non absurde de ipso Romano imperio creditur dictum* ('not without reason this is taken to refer to the Roman empire itself'), and Jerome *in Hiër.* 5, 27 (CSEL 59, 312) *eum qui tenet, Romanum imperium ostendit* ('he demonstrates Roman power who holds him').

⁵³ For the impact of the battle of Adrianople and the anxiety of observers like Ambrose and Jerome see most recently Lenski 1997.

⁵⁴ 'The king and founder of this City has in the scriptures of his people revealed this statement of the divine law, which says: "God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble"'. See MacCormack 1998, 200-2, whose translation is quoted here.

Quotations from AS onwards

With the life of Alexander Severus the author seems to have used up the possibilities of this play with Vergil and we do not come across new types of imitation. In the lives of the two Maximini, the son is honoured with a quotation from Vergil in praise of his beauty (*Max.* 27.4), just as had been done in the life of Diadumenianus:

*qualis ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,
extulit os sacrum caelo tenebrasque resolvit,
talis erat iuvenis patrio sub nomine clarus.*⁵⁵

Here A. 8.589 and 591 are followed by a lame verse added by the author himself. We are told that the tutor of the young prince Fabillus, a Greek man of letters, translated these lines from Vergil into Greek verse. Translations such as these, most often from Greek into Latin, are an oddity in the *HA*. Repeatedly, the author himself criticises the poor quality of these translations.⁵⁶ In an earlier publication I compared the author in this respect to Ausonius, whose works contain a number of poems, marked *ex Graeco* ('from the Greek') in the manuscripts.⁵⁷ This time I would like to add that again in Augustine we find strikingly similar remarks. Even the criticism of the performance of the translator is there: *haec sane Erythraea sibylla quaedam de Christo manifesta conscripsit, quod etiam nos prius in latina lingua versibus male latinis et non stantibus legimus per nescio cuius interpretis imperitiam, sicut post cognovimus* (*De civ. D.* 18.23).⁵⁸

The prophecy about Marcellus in the 'Heldenschau' (A. 6.869-71) seems to be the author's favourite passage. It is quoted once again in *Gd.* 20.5 about Gordianus Junior in a prediction by the Elder Gordian of the untimely death of his son, just as Hadrian had predicted the early death of Aelius. The first line of the prophecy is quoted a third time in *Cl.* 10.6 about the short reign of that emperor's brother Quintillus. In the same chapter we find no fewer than three *sortes* given to Claudius.

⁵⁵ 'Like to the star of the morning when he, new-bathed in the Ocean, / raises his holy face and scatters the darkness from heaven, / So did the young man seem, fair-famed in the name of his father.'

⁵⁶ Very little has been written on this, admittedly inferior, poetry. See Baldwin 1978.

⁵⁷ Chapter 10 in this volume: 'Die Poesie in der *Historia Augusta*' (note eds.).

⁵⁸ 'This Erythraean Sibyl certainly wrote some passages that openly refer to Christ: these we read first in a Latin translation composed in verses of poor Latinity and not metrically sound, due to the ignorance of their anonymous translator, as we afterwards learned.'

The first, in hendecasyllables, no doubt of the author's own making, predicts a brilliant future for Claudius' offspring. When the emperor inquired after the duration of his reign, he received the following oracle: *tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas* (A. 1.265),⁵⁹ which tallies exactly with the period of September 268 – September 270 during which he was Augustus. About his descendants he was told *his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono* (A. 1.278),⁶⁰ which was Baynes' main argument for his thesis that the *HA* was written to celebrate Julian the Apostate, the last emperor of the second Flavian dynasty.

Finally, in *Tac.* 5.1, the aged senator is called upon by his fellow-senators to accept the throne. When he pleads to be excused on account of his old age he is put under pressure by acclamations such as these: *et Hadrianus ad imperium senex venit* and *et tu legisti: incanaque menta regis Romani*.⁶¹ The explicit mention of Hadrian and the quotation of the same verse from the 'Heldenschau' betrays the same hand we saw at work earlier in the life of Hadrian.

This is not a complete list of Virgilian reminiscences in the *HA*,⁶² but the examples presented so far give a clear impression of the ways the author treated the sacred text of the *Aeneid*. The following general observations can be made. The range of the quotations is small. The 'Heldenschau' provides the bulk of the material. Quotations from this passage are found in all parts of the work, in most of which the author clearly does not follow his sources timidly, but indulges his personal whims. In all probability this is even the case in the otherwise reliable life of Hadrian. The resemblance to *Tac.* 5.1 makes it practically certain that the quotation in *H* 2.8 was an addition by the author himself. So the use of verses from the *Aeneid* may be added to the list of devices that are dear to him, along with the prefaces, the fake documents and the programmatic statements.

The most important passage is the one in *Alexander Severus* in which the quotation from the 'Heldenschau' serves to inspire confidence in the future of Rome. In this respect the *HA* is diametrically opposed to Christian authors such as Lactantius and Augustine. It cannot be stated

⁵⁹ 'until the third summer will have seen him as king in Latium'.

⁶⁰ 'Neither a goal nor a limit of time will I set for their power'.

⁶¹ 'Hadrian also came to power when an old man', 'You yourself have read: "And the hoary beard of a Roman king"' (A. 6.809-10).

⁶² Other undisputed instances are: *AS* 41.1 – A. 1.655; *Car.* 13.3 – A. 10.830; see now Fündling 2006, 153.

with absolute confidence that the author directly makes a stand against Christian views, but a number of resemblances between the *HA* and the *Tolle, lege* episode in Augustine's *Confessions* does suggest that the author of the *HA* was familiar with Augustine's work.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE DISCUSSION OF AUTHORSHIP

Dessau's thesis of single authorship of the *HA* has received far less attention than his thesis concerning the date of the collection. After reading the 1998 issue of 'Literary and Linguistic Computing', which is entirely devoted to stylometric studies of the *HA*,¹ I felt the need to return to the well-known seminal studies on the question dating from around 1890.² Rereading Dessau's magisterial paper and the very thorough reactions to it by Mommsen, Klebs and Wölfflin, with special attention for what they had to say about the authorship, it became clear to me that the essential questions had all been asked in these papers and that in this respect the *HA-Forschung* has until recently not moved far beyond the point to which they had taken it. Of special importance is the contribution to the discussion by Wölfflin, the best Latin linguist at the time, who by a wealth of observations pointed to relations between widely separated parts of the *HA*, without for that matter accepting single authorship or a Theodosian date for the collection as a whole.

The only substantial paper on the subject from more recent times is by Peter White (1967), written under the supervision of Momigliano, in which the pupil arrived at conclusions that were diametrically opposed to what his master saw as the truth of the matter. White's approach differed from that of Wölfflin, or Klebs for that matter, in that he argued from thematic constants in the *HA* rather than linguistic uniformity. In the subsequent literature, especially the volumes of the *Colloquia*, one finds a large number of lapidary statements, all in favour of single authorship, but hardly any substantiation on the basis of style and language of the biographies.³ Computer studies on the *HA* have been inaugurated by Ian Marriott, whose confirmation of the unitarian view provoked a shout of jubilation from Syme in the *London Review of*

¹ *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 13 no 3, 1998. The volume contains studies of L.W. Gurney & P.J. Gurney, E.K. Tse, F.J. Tweedie & B.D. Frischer and J. Rudman.

² Dessau 1889; id. 1892; Mommsen 1890; Klebs 1890; id. 1892, 1-52, 514-549; Wölfflin 1891.

³ An exception must be made for two detailed studies by Adams: 'The authorship of the *HA*' (1972) and 'The linguistic unity of the *HA*' (1977). As the second title shows the author is a unitarian.

Books.⁴ His method, however, has been severely criticised since then.⁵ Six years ago Meissner introduced computer based research on the Bonner Colloquium, which led him to postulate at least dual authorship for the collection. These criticisms and contradictions among computer linguists may well be greeted by the *HA* specialists as a welcome case of fratricide, but in my opinion their techniques are here to stay and will be used with growing sophistication in the years to come.

Back to Dessau. His main argument for single authorship was that in every single scriptor peculiar expressions such as *in litteras mittere* and literary mannerisms like puns, verses translated from Greek, oracles and other faked documents could be found. In assigning the lives to the six *scriptores* Dessau followed the attributions in the manuscript tradition. Dessau himself, however, had pointed out the many incongruities in these attributions, especially in the series of emperors between Hadrian and Caracalla and concluded that the manuscript attribution to the *scriptores* Spartianus, Lampridius, Vulcacius Gallicanus and Capitolinus was chaotic and unacceptable.⁶ Now it seems to me methodically wrong to reject the traditional distribution of the lives over the six *scriptores* and subsequently to base the discussion of homogeneity or heterogeneity of the collection as a whole on this same distribution. What is the use of bringing the deadly serious *vita Pii* under the same heading as the frivolous *Albinus*, both of which go under the name of Capitolinus in the manuscripts? What do the *vita Hadriani* and the bizarre *Pescennius Niger* have in common apart from the name of Spartianus in the *subscriptio*? Take for instance Dessau's favourite example, the expression *in litteras mittere*. It is found, he argues, in all six *scriptores*. That suggests stylistic uniformity in the collection as a whole, but the only *vita* under the name of Spartianus that has the expression is the *Pescennius Niger* (in its preface!). It is surely more significant and informative to say that the expression is absent from all the lives of the Augusti in the series Hadrianus-Caracalla.

The same applies to a number of other peculiarities like dedications, prefaces and fake documents, that have been conveniently put together in Paschoud's edition of the lives of Aurelian and Tacitus (1996, L),

⁴ Marriott 1979. Syme's reaction is published in the *London Review of Books*, 4-17 sept. (1980) 15 sqq. = 1983, 212. See now Paschoud 2003b.

⁵ Sansone 1990.

⁶ Casaubonus already had his doubts with regard to these attributions. Ad PN 1.1 he notes *Non abest suspicio, & hanc Nigri, & eam quae sequitur Albinus vitam, ab eodem auctore scriptam. illa tamen Capitolino, haec constanter in omnibus libris Spartiano tribuitur.*

where it can be seen that they are if not totally absent, at least extremely rare in those lives. For that reason it was in itself a step forward that Mommsen tried a different classification of the *vitae*. He distinguished a diocletianic and a constantinian series, the former running from Hadrian to Macrinus and the latter up to the Gordiani.⁷ Within the series Hadrian-Macrinus he made the important and illuminating distinction of Haupt- and Nebenviten or primary and secondary lives, which was put to excellent use by Wölfflin. The passage in Mommsen's article on the names and the number of authors is uncharacteristically vague and even syntactically confused: 'Es muss unumwunden gestanden werden, dass die Zurechtstellung der Autornamen sowohl in der diocletianischen wie in der constantinischen Reihe sich in befriedigender Weise nicht bewirken lässt *und dass man wohl berechtigt ist Dessaus verwegene Hypothese abzuweisen*,⁸ wonach unter allen diesen Namen ein und derselbe Schriftsteller der theodosischen Zeit sich verbergen soll, und vielmehr die Pluralität der Verfasser so wie von den vier Namen drei aufrecht zu halten sein werden (*exit* Gallicanus, dH), dass aber die Verknüpfung der einzelnen Biographien mit den einzelnen Namen theils sehr irrig, theils wenigstens ungenügend beglaubigt ist' (p. 245). At first sight it seems as if the justification to reject Dessau's thesis of single authorship is the consequence of the impossibility to adjudicate the biographies to the *scriptores* in a satisfactory manner. What Mommsen must have meant, however, is that one way of cutting this Gordian knot would be to reject the six *scriptores* altogether, which is exactly what Dessau had proposed to do. Mommsen, however, refused even to consider this. The passage contains Mommsen's only explicit reaction to Dessau's thesis concerning the single authorship. He called it 'verwegen', which was not meant as a compliment. In spite of this rejection of the authorship thesis, Mommsen did accept Dessau's arguments for a post-constantinian date of parts of the *HA*, such as the Probus-oracle,⁹ the prophecy of future greatness for the descendants of the emperor Claudius¹⁰ and the copying of whole passages directly from Victor and Eutropius.¹¹ He even acknowledged traces of forgery in the primary lives: 'weder sind die secundären Biographien des selbständigen Inhalts

⁷ The distinction between the 'diocletianic' and the 'constantinian' series was based on the dedications in the lives to these emperors. Mommsen practically ignored Dessau's devastating criticisms of these faked passages.

⁸ All italics in quotations from Mommsen and Dessau are mine.

⁹ Dessau 1889, 355 (pr. 24.2-3); Mommsen 1890, 27.4-5. See now Paschoud 2001, 162-5.

¹⁰ Dessau 1889, 341-4 (cl. 9.9); Mommsen 1890, 252-3.

¹¹ Dessau 1889, 362-71; Mommsen 1890, 277.

völlig baar, noch sind die primären von den Fälschungen gänzlich verschont geblieben' (p. 250). In this context he even anticipated Syme's theory that the author became ever more daring as he went on: 'auch abgesehen davon, dass allem Anschein nach dem Fälscher im Lauf der Arbeit Lust und Muth gewachsen ist' (p. 251).

In other words, both Dessau and Mommsen were well aware of the stylistic heterogeneity in the *HA* up to the series of lives under the names of Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus, but they explained it in a different manner. In Mommsen's view it was the natural result of the plurality of *scriptores* who wrote this section of the *HA*. According to Dessau it was the effect of the source material that was reproduced more or less mechanically by the single author of the collection.

On the other hand, perhaps more interestingly, they discovered correspondences in widely separated areas of the *HA*, that went under the names of different *scriptores*, correspondences that were to be elaborated in great detail by Wölfflin. They were more of a problem for Mommsen than for Dessau. Mommsen saw in them the hand of the first Diaskeuast, who collected the lives of the six *scriptores* at the end of the reign of Constantine, and whom he suspected of having added the secondary lives. He had to admit, however, that the collection contained traces of the period of Valentinian and Theodosius.¹² For that reason he had to introduce a second Diaskeuast, operating in that period, whose influence on the contents and the form of the text could not be established with certainty. At this point Dessau was certainly right when he maintained in his reaction to Mommsen's article that these traces from a later period were in no way insignificant, but put their mark on all the lives under the name of Vopiscus. How else could it be explained that the author of these lives was so ignorant about events that had occurred only thirty years ago?

Before continuing with Dessau's reaction in 1892, it may be useful to formulate the problem raised by the hypothesis of single authorship. Reading through the collection from the beginning up to at least the life of Alexander one finds an unmistakable stylistic diversity, not merely between for instance the lives of Marcus and Avidius Cassius (Momm-

¹² 'In dieser Weise scheint unter Diocletian und Constantin die uns vorliegende Sammlung der Kaiserbiographien von Hadrian bis auf Carus successiv entstanden und um das J. 330, wesentlich in der Form in welcher sie uns vorliegt, zum Abschluss gekommen zu sein. Aber Dessau hat erwiesen, dass dies nur mit Einschränkungen gilt und die Sammlung noch weiterer Manipulation unterlegen hat. Es finden theils sich Abschnitte darin, welche nachconstantinischen Schriftstellern entlehnt sind, theils sachliche Hindeutungen auf Personen und Verhältnisse der valentinianisch-theodosischen Zeit.'

sen 1890, 246-50), of which the contents overlap and are in part identical, but even within some of the primary lives. I am referring to the insertions into the Marcus and the Severus that, as Dessau had seen, had been copied directly from Aurelius Victor and Eutropius respectively. The fashion in the *HA* studies has been to concentrate on those passages where the author demonstrates the individual characteristics that have been described so brilliantly by Syme, resulting in the composite picture of the rogue scholar who develops his style and his panache until he reaches his full powers in the lives under the name of Vopiscus. This has resulted in many valuable insights into the personality of an exceptionally mischievous *grammaticus*, but in a study of single or plural authorship it is decidedly out of balance. It is what in statistics is called 'cherry picking', that is to say concentrating on some parts of the evidence that suit your preconceived notions, while disregarding others. In an enquiry about authorship, we are obliged to look not only for correspondences and similarities in the text as a whole, but also and with the same attentiveness for differences and contradictions. The most tangible are those that separate the primary lives and the lives in the last series. If these stylistic differences are to be explained in terms of single authorship, the reason for them must be the totally predominant influence of the source material. That, however, raises the question where copying ends and adaption begins.

The problem was faced squarely by Dessau in his 1892 reaction to the criticisms by Mommsen, Klebs and Wölfflin. He did not deny or blur the stylistic unevenness within the *HA*. On the contrary, in his opinion, once the author had decided to present his work as a collection of lives written a century earlier, he felt free to reproduce his sources without adapting them to his own style of writing: 'Ferner war er der Nöthigung überhoben, den Text einer gleichmässigen stilistischen Überarbeitung zu unterziehen; für Anstösse *in den von ihm nur herausgegebenen Viten* war er dem Leser nicht mehr verantwortlich. Die ausserordentlich grossen Ungleichheiten, oft in einer und derselben Biographie, und die Rohheit mancher Einlagen, dürften dadurch zu erklären sein, dass der Autor nicht mehr die Mühe auf die Durcharbeitung verwandte, die er auf eine unter seinem Namen erscheinen sollende Arbeit doch wohl verwandt hatte' (p. 577). This is crystal clear. Even more frank is the following statement: 'Zu dem Besten, was sich in unseren Biographien findet, gehört der Abriss des Vorlebens einiger Kaiser des 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. *Und diese Abschnitte sind, wie sich Leicht beweisen lässt, unverändert übernommen einem Autor, der vor der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts ge-*

schrieben hat' (p. 601). The words 'wie sich leicht beweisen lässt' are tantalizing. If only Dessau had taken the trouble to explain to his less penetrating readers exactly how it could be proved that these segments had been taken over without changes, I for one would have been deeply grateful to him. As it is, Dessau leaves us to our own devices. My personal conclusion from the stylistic diversity between the first and the last sections of the *HA* is that they have not been written by the same author. The differences between the primary and the secondary lives are equally in my opinion too great to accept single authorship and even within some of the primary lives we see two different hands at work. Of course it may well be, and I personally believe, that the man who wrote the lives by Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus put the collection together, and also that he wrote the secondary lives as well as the insertions into the primary lives. But that makes him the redactor and not the author of the collection as a whole. In this respect there is, in my opinion, some terminological vagueness in Dessau's famous summing-up: 'Ein Autor, der seine Quellen in sächlicher Hinsicht so wenig durcharbeitete, wird sich auch wohl kaum, oder doch nur selten, die Mühe gegeben haben, sie sprachlich zu durchdringen, er wird noch in ganz anderer Weise als andere Historiker des Althertums 'abgeschrieben' haben. Es zerfallen meiner Meinung nach die Vitae sprachlich in drei Bestandtheile, je nachdem lateinische Quellen abgeschrieben, oder griechische übersetzt sind, oder endlich eigene Arbeit des Autors vorliegt.'

In this connection I wonder whether the attribution of the lives to different *scriptores* by the final redactor, whom I take to be identical with the author of the lives of 'Trebellius Pollio' and 'Vopiscus', was intended as a reminder that he had copied the preceding lives from earlier biographers and historians. That would be a procedural parallel to Ammianus Marcellinus, who had started with a rapid overview of the history of the second and third century before treating contemporary history independently and in greater detail. The idea may also have been suggested to him by the practice of Cicero, the author he admired above all, and who in his dialogues used different characters to present his own views.

This is of course pure speculation. We reach more solid ground when we turn to the recent computer-based studies. As you can see, a whole issue of the magazine '*Literary and Linguistic Computing*', which has its base in Oxford, has been devoted to the *HA*. The authors are no specialists in the field. They have acquainted themselves with the problems by studying Syme's three books on the subject and Chastagnol's introduc-

tion to his bilingual edition of 1994. As far as I can see, they make few beginner's mistakes.¹³ They are also quite candid about what they can and cannot do. To quote Gurney & Gurney: 'Stylometrics cannot arbitrate the question of elements of style and composition that are based on arguments such as: 'the six alleged authors have so many traits in common – linguistic idiosyncrasies, literary quirks and interests, intellectual attitudes and social and political opinions – that the hypothesis of a single author becomes necessary' (a quote from Barnes 1978, 155). Nor can it deal with the characteristics that led D.S. Potter to describe the *HA* as a 'sustained joke'. It can, however, deal with his argument that 'although the more elaborate efforts to quantify this impression (a reference to Marriott, dH) have been shown to be inadequate, there does not seem to be any significant variation in the prose style from the beginning to the end of the collection'. And this is exactly what they set out to do in a rigorous manner that makes the traditional statements sound impressionistic and amateurish by comparison. They take great trouble for instance to eliminate ambiguities in the text, for instance in the case of *cum* as a preposition and *cum* as a conjunction, which Meissner had failed to do. They also enlarged the scope of Meissner's enquiry in selecting not seven, but twenty-five function words, along with a set of nouns and a set of verbal lemmas common to all the thirty *vitae* in the *HA* and the twelve in Suetonius, whom they use as a control text. Their findings are clear and demonstrate that in all forty-two *vitae* each of the various sets separates the *vitae* of Suetonius from those in the *HA*, as well as differentiating between the six *scriptores*. It turns out that the set of twenty-five function words, clearly superior to Meissner's seven, confirms his conclusion of multiple authorship. Indeed, Gurney & Gurney go a step further: 'This study has demonstrated that the manuscript tradition of six otherwise unknown authors for the *SHA* cannot be disproved, but rather that multiple authorship is highly probable. It has not proved, and possibly cannot prove conclusively, however, the specific attributions of the thirty biographies to the six authors of the manuscript tradition. Such specific attribution could be developed only if there were comparable biographies of undisputed authorship by these anonymous authors. The final conclusion that must be drawn from this research, therefore, is that the specific attributions of the thirty biographies to the six authors in the manuscripts are probably the

¹³ Rudman quotes Syme's summing-up of Mommsen's theory of the genesis of the *HA* as if it was Syme's own opinion on p. 154.

most accurate that we can develop, and are, therefore, the best, at present, that can be given to historians; and furthermore that the belief that Klebs and other 'traditionalists' have had in the manuscript tradition of six independent authors is vindicated' (p. 130). The article by Tse, Tweedy and Frischer concludes with the words 'our work joins the growing body of quantitative studies against the hypothesis of single authorship. We must hope that the mounting evidence for multiple authorship will not be ignored by the classics community.'

Is this the end of the discussion? Certainly not. A stylometric test of the *HA* in the absence of additional writings by the author or by any of the *scriptores* can only be a test of homogeneity. The ideal prose text for such a test should be free from 'Fremdkörper' like quotations, documents, verse and editorial intervention. Ideally too, there should be a corpus of texts belonging to the same period, the same genre and of comparable length. It is clear that these conditions are not met and never will be. Rudman in his skeptical article is particularly troubled by the presence in the *HA* of 130 documents, by snippets of poetry and by the fact that the oldest manuscripts are about 500 years removed from the original. To take these points in reverse order: wrong readings have inevitably been introduced into the text during 500 years of transmission. But we may safely assume that these wrong readings are the usual results of carelessness and negligence and have not been introduced on purpose by one single individual. The fragments of verse do not amount to much quantitatively. I counted some thirty-five lines, that is one page on a total of 550 in the Teubner edition.

The documents, however, are a real problem, or rather they would be if they were real documents, in which case they would represent the stylistic peculiarities of their authors. But all students of the *HA* without exception agree that they are fakes written by the same pen as the lives into which they were inserted. For these reasons I am less pessimistic with regard to the feasibility of further stylometric research on the *HA* than Rudman, who wrote in his conclusion: 'The discrepancies in identifying the documents must be adjudicated before any decisions can be made on how to treat them in an authorship study. Are poetic flourishes built into the prose to be ignored? (Clover, 1991). This must be studied and resolved. Each one of the mentioned types of interpolations must be studied and adjudicated. I have not seen a study of the *HA* that takes anything discussed in this section into consideration. The available *HA* texts present an almost invariably fatal flaw to every non-traditional authorship study. The old computer industry saw, 'garbage

in garbage out', is apropos' (p. 154). Is it not a wonderful example of constance in the study of the *HA* that we come across the metaphor of garbage at the end of the century, that had already been used in its beginning by Friedrich Leo (1901, 292), who had complained about the 'Gelehrtenpficht Kehrlichthaufen durchzuwuehlen'? But in earnest. I do not think the discussion on single versus multiple authorship is closed. I do think the tide is changing. And in any case it is no longer possible to settle the dispute by sweeping statements.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DIE KAUSALKONJUNKTIONEN *QUOD*, *QUIA* UND *QUONIAM* IN DER *HISTORIA AUGUSTA*

In rezenten linguistischen Studien, angeregt durch die sogenannte *Amsterdam School of Linguistics*, ist die Verwendung der Kausalkonjunktionen *quod*, *quia* und *quoniam* in der klassischen Periode sowie bei einem späten Autor wie Ammianus Marcellinus untersucht worden.¹ Ich möchte in diesem Beitrag die Sprache der *Historia Augusta* hinsichtlich dieser Konjunktionen im Vergleich mit anderen Autoren überprüfen, um so die Frage nach der sprachlichen Eigenart der *HA* anzugehen, und zweitens einige Einzelbeobachtungen über kausale Ausdrücke in der *HA* machen.

Fangen wir mit der klassischen Periode an. Die genannten drei Konjunktionen überschneiden sich teilweise aber unterscheiden sich auch von einander. Vergleichen wir *quod* mit *quia*, so stellt sich heraus, dass *quod* weniger spezifisch ist. Überall dort wo *quia* verwendet wird, kann, von stilistischen Erwägungen abgesehen, im Prinzip *quod* substituiert werden; umgekehrt aber gilt das nicht. Anders gesagt, *quia* ist von diesen zwei die markierte Form. In klassischer Zeit, so lesen wir bei Szantyr (1965, 585), tritt *quia* als prosaische und alltagssprachliche Partikel hinter *quod* zurück, im Spätlatein aber überwiegt *quia* bei den meisten Schriftstellern weitaus vor *quod*. *Quoniam* unterscheidet sich von *quod* und *quia* dadurch, dass der von *quoniam* eingeleitete Nebensatz ausdrückt, was bekanntlich oder eingestandenermaßen der Fall ist. Eben deshalb wird *quoniam* oft verwendet als Begründung, warum der Sprecher was er im Hauptsatz sagen will, zu sagen berechtigt ist.

(1) Cic. Dom. 93: *et quoniam hoc reprehendis, quod solere me dicas de me ipsum gloriosius praedicare, quis umquam audivit cum ego de me nisi coactus ac necessario dicerem?*

Dass der Angeredete, Clodius, Cicero diesen Vorwurf machte, wusste jeder Zuhörer. Der *quoniam*-Satz bietet also den Grund, warum Cicero sagt: „wer hat mich je“ usw. Es ist, in der Terminologie von Pinkster, ein pseudokausaler Satz. In der klassischen Zeit wird *quoniam* gerne verwendet in der transitio:

¹ Pinkster 1987; id. 2012 (forthcoming); Fugier 1989; Bolkestein 1991; Roca Alamà 1997.

(2) Cic. *S. Rosc.* 119: *quoniam fidem magistri cognovistis, cognoscite nunc discipuli aequitatem.*

Quoniam eignet sich daher auch als Einleitung der *propositio maior* in einem Syllogismus:

(3) Cic. *Fin.* 4,77: *quoniam omne peccatum imbecillitatis et inconstantiae est* (Major), *haec autem vitia in omnibus stultis aequae magna sunt* (Minor), *necesse est paria esse peccata* (Conclusio).

Die kausale Bedeutung von *quod* wurde wegen der vielen Funktionen dieser Konjunktion schon früh explizit gemacht durch demonstrative Korrelativa im Hauptsatz wie *hoc, eo* oder Adverbia wie *propterea, idcirco, ideo*.

(4) Cic. *Planc.* 61: *quasi vero isti ... propterea magistratus ceperint quod triumpharint.*

In nachklassischer Zeit konkurrierten durch *quod* eingeleitete Nebensätze ausserdem in zunehmendem Masse mit dem *AcI*, und wurde *quod* zuletzt sogar in temporalem, finalem und konsekutivem Sinne verwendet. So entwickelte sich *quod* zu einer Art „Universalkonjunktion“, wie sie Szantyr (1965, 579) genannt hat.

Was den Modus betrifft, wurden *quod* und *quia* in der klassischen Periode nicht nur in der *oratio obliqua* mit dem Konjunktiv verbunden, sondern auch in innerlich abhängigen Sätzen von Typ 5a und b:

(5a) Cic. *Tusc.* 5,105: *Aristedes expulsus est patria, quod praeter modum iustus esset.*

(5b) Cic. *Fin.* 1,32: *nemo ipsam voluptatem, quia voluptas sit, aspernatur.*

In späterer Zeit finden wir nach *quod*, ebenso wie nach *quia*, auch unbegründete Konjunktive an Stelle des Indikativs.

Im folgendem wird zuerst die Folge Konjunktion – *Verbum Regens* (VR) in Sueton, Ammian und der *HA* miteinander verglichen vor dem Hintergrund der Praxis bei Cicero und Seneca, dann die Modi die mit diesen Konjunktionen verbunden sind, und drittens, hinsichtlich *quod*, die Anwesenheit von Korrelativa im Hauptsatz, die das kausale Verhältnis von Haupt- und Nebensatz deutlicher unterstreichen, wie das z.B. in (4) der Fall ist.

Zuerst aber die Daten für die Folge Konjunktion – VR bei Cicero und Seneca.²

Die Folge von Haupt- und Nebensatz in Cicero und Seneca finden Sie in Prozenten im Verzeichnis. Ich bemerke dazu, dass für diese Folge die Stelle des VR entscheidend war. Also notiere ich z.B. bei (4b) die Folge *quia* – VR (*aspernatur*), obwohl der Hauptsatz schon vor *quia* anfängt.

Was auffällt ist, dass bei beiden Autoren, sei es mit ungleicher Frequenz, *quod* und *quia* überwiegend dem VR folgen, während eine bemerkenswerte Verschiebung eintritt bei *quoniam*, das bei Seneca viel öfter als bei Cicero nach dem VR kommt.

CICERO		
	Konjunktion – VR (%)	VR – Konjunktion (%)
<i>quoniam</i>	72	28
<i>quia</i>	24	76
<i>quod</i>	8	92
SENECA		
	Konjunktion – VR (%)	VR – Konjunktion (%)
<i>quoniam</i>	34	66
<i>quia</i>	12	88
<i>quod</i>	2	98

Analog damit lässt sich übrigens bei Seneca beobachten, dass der Unterschied zwischen *quoniam* und dem Paar *quia/quod* sich verwischt, anders gesagt, dass *quoniam* in zunehmendem Masse eine „normale“ Kausalkonjunktion wird.

S U E T O N I U S			
quoniam (11)			
<i>quoniam</i> – VR	8	VR – <i>quoniam</i>	3
quia (33)			
<i>quia</i> – VR	22	VR – <i>quia</i>	11
<i>quia</i> + Indik.	28	<i>quia</i> + Konj.	5 (Or. obl.)
quod (kausal) (149)			
<i>quod</i> – VR	31	VR – <i>quod</i>	118
<i>quod</i> + Indik.	54	<i>quod</i> + Konj.	95
praecedat: <i>non alia de causa quam</i> (1), <i>nullo magis nomine quam</i> (1), <i>ideo</i> (1), <i>ob hoc</i> .			

² Diese Daten sind Bolkestein 1991 entnommen.

Bei Sueton hat sich noch wenig geändert. Er verwendet *quoniam* relativ selten und in traditioneller Weise in der *transitio*, wie in (6):

(6) Suet. Aug. 61,1: *quoniam qualis in imperis ac magistratibus regendaque per terrarum orbem pace belloque re p. fuerit, exposui, referam nunc interiorem ac familiarem eius vitam.*

Die Unterschiede zwischen *quod* und *quia* sind schärfer geworden. *Quia* geht meistens dem VR voraus, während das bei *quod* nur relativ selten der Fall ist. Was am meisten auffällt, ist die Rollenverteilung bei der Verwendung des Konjunktivs. *Quia* hat ihn so gut wie nie, während er bei *quod* doppelt so häufig vorkommt wie der Indikativ. Wie finden hier auch gute Beispiele für unterschiedslose Verwendung der beiden Modi, wie in (7), wo wir unmittelbar nach den Indikativen *celebraverat, ferebatur* den Konjunktivformen *circumferret* und *indidisset* begegnen:

(7) Cic. Dom. 10,3 (complures senatores ... interemit) *Salvium Cocceianum, quod Othonis imperatoris patruī sui diem natalem celebraverat; Mettium Pomposianum, quod habere imperatoriam genesim vulgo ferebatur et quod depictum orbem terrae in membrana contionesque regum ac ducum ex Tito Livio circumferret quodque servis nomina Magonis et Hannibalis indidisset.*

Die korrelativen Demonstrativa vom Typ *hoc, ideo* sind noch ganz unbedeutend. Jetzt machen wir einen Riesensprung zu Ammian, dem Zeitgenossen des Redaktors der HA:³

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS

quoniam (83)

<i>quoniam</i> – VR	77	VR – <i>quoniam</i>	6
<i>quoniam</i> + Indik.	82	<i>quoniam</i> + Konj.	1 (?)

quia (74)

<i>quia</i> – VR	55	VR – <i>quia</i>	19
<i>quia</i> + Indik.	73	<i>quia</i> + Konj.	1 (?)

praecedit: *ideo* (1)

quod (kausal) (394)

<i>quod</i> – VR	0	VR – <i>quod</i>	394
<i>quod</i> + Indik.	260	<i>quod</i> + Konj.	134
praecedit: Adverbium 53 (<i>ideo</i> 41); Subst. in Abl. 75 (<i>ea re</i> 20); Präpositionalgefüge 12			

³ z. T. nach Roca Alamà 1997 und Viansino 1985.

Hier hat sich ziemlich viel geändert, nicht aber in der Verwendung von *quoniam*. Noch immer wird *quoniam* gebraucht in der Transitio, wie in (8):

(8) 22,15,1 *strictim itaque, quoniam tempus videtur hoc flagitare, res Aegyptiacae tangantur.*

und in pseudokausalen Sätzen wie (9):

(9) 25,4,23 *et quoniam eum obtrectatores novos bellorum tumultus ad perniciem rei communis insimulant concitasse, sciant docente veritate perspicue non Iulianum, sed Constantinum ardores Parthicos succendisse.*

Vermerkwürdig ist ein einziger Fall, wo *quoniam* mit einem Verbum affectuum verbunden ist, was eine Neuerung bedeutet. Das unmittelbar folgende *ideo quod* hat es nach aller Wahrscheinlichkeit hervorgerufen:

(10) 16,11,12 *indignati, quoniam ex commeatu ... ideo nihil sumere potuerunt, quod partem eius Barbatio ... superbe praesumpsit.*

Die Rollenverteilung zwischen *quia* und *quod* ist noch viel weiter fortgeschritten als bei Sueton. Bei Ammian findet sich *quia* dreimal so häufig vor dem VR, wie dahinten, und der Konjunktiv nach *quia* fehlt, abgesehen von einer einzigen, noch dazu umstrittenen Lesart, ganz. *Quod* dagegen folgt ausnahmslos dem VR und hat in mehr als fünfzig Prozent der Fälle einen Konjunktiv bei sich. Noch überraschender ist es, dass in mehr als die Hälfte der Nebensätze mit *quod* korrelative Demonstrativa vorangehen. Man geht wohl nicht fehl, wenn man dahinter das Bedürfnis vermutet, kausales *quod* deutlicher von *quod* nach Verba sentiendi et declarandi statt Acl abzuheben.

Jetzt zur *Historia Augusta*. Im voraus muss gesagt werden dass die Abgrenzung von kausalen und explicativen *quod*-Sätzen nicht immer problemlos ist. So kann man bei Verbindungen wie *mirari, quod* und *laetari quod* daran zweifeln ob der *quod*-Satz den Grund der Verwunderung, bzw. Freude angibt oder deren Inhalt. Ich bin der Einteilung gefolgt, die Kühner-Stegmann bieten, und habe diese Sätze nicht zu den kausalen gerechnet. Die Wahl ist an sich willkürlich, wichtig ist nur sie konsequent zu handhaben. Das gleiche Problem bieten Verbindungen wie *eo facilius, quod*, wo man sich fragt ob *quod* eine nähere Bestimmung gibt von *eo*, oder *eo facilius* zusammen begründet. Auch

hier bin ich Kühner-Stegmann gefolgt und habe solche Sätze außer Acht gelassen.

HISTORIA AUGUSTA

quoniam (30)

<i>quoniam</i> – VR	30	VR – <i>quoniam</i>	0
<i>quoniam</i> + Indik.	29	<i>quoniam</i> + Konj,	1 (Or. obl.)

quia (84)

<i>quia</i> – VR	26	VR – <i>quia</i>	58
<i>quia</i> + Indik.	82	<i>quia</i> + Konj,	2 (Irrealis; Or. obl.)
<i>praecedit: idcirco</i> (9)			

quod (kausal) (237)

<i>quod</i> – VR	43	VR – <i>quod</i>	194
<i>quod</i> + Indik.	92	<i>quod</i> + Konj.	145 (17 Or. obl.)
<i>praecedit: hoc ipso</i> (1), <i>eo</i> (2), <i>ideo</i> (2), <i>ob hoc (solum)</i> (7), <i>idcirco</i> (45)			

Sehen wir die Daten an. Das Zahlenverhältnis zwischen *quoniam*, *quia* und *quod*, etwa 1 : 3 : 8 ist gut mit dem in Sueton zu vergleichen 1 : 3 : 13, obwohl bei ihm *quod* dominanter ist. Bei Ammian dagegen findet sich *quoniam* fast genau so oft wie *quia*, und dominiert *quod* weit mehr als in Sueton und der HA. Im Gebrauch der Modi ist die Übereinstimmung zwischen der HA und Sueton ebenso treffend. Bei beiden hat *quia* fast ausnahmslos den Indikativ, während *quod* viel öfter einen Konjunktiv nach sich zieht. In dieser Hinsicht unterscheiden sie sich wieder von Ammian, bei dem der Indikativ nach *quod* zweimal so häufig vorkommt wie der Konjunktiv. Die HA ist, im Vergleich mit Ammian, zurückhaltend mit demonstrativen Korrelativa. Nur ein Korrelativum *idcirco* ragt auffällig heraus, sowohl bei *quia* als bei *quod*. Zuerst aber einige Bemerkungen zu den einzelnen Konjunktionen. Der Gebrauch von *quoniam* ist in der HA ganz klassisch, in dem Sinne dass die Konjunktion, ganz wie bei Cicero, verwendet wird in pseudokausalen Sätzen mit program-matischem Charakter wie (11), und *in transitione* wie (12) und (13):

(11) S 17,5: *et quoniam longum est minora persequi, huius magnifica illa*

(12) Tac. 16,8: *nunc quoniam interim meo studio satisfeci, claudam istud volumen.*

(13) C 20,4: *quoniam laeta iam percensui, nunc convertar ad necessaria.*

Über den Gebrauch von *quia* können wir kurz sein: es ist ganz klas-sisch, abgesehen von einer einzelnen Verwischung der Grenze mit *quo-niam* in (14):

(14) AS 45,6: *et quia de publicandis dispositionibus mentio contigit: ubi aliquos voluisset ... vel praepositos facere vel procuratores ... ordinare, nomina ... proponebat.*

Weiter ist die Phrase *nisi quia* in (15) auf den ersten Blick befremdend:

(15) Tac. 16,6: *vir Aureliano, Traiano, Hadriano, Antoninis, Alexandro, Claudioque praeferendus, nisi quia in illis varia, in hoc omnia praecipua iuncta fuere.*

Sie wird von Paschoud (1996, 313) ad loc. erklärt mit „seulement que“, und ist nicht ohne Parallele in der klassischen Sprache. Was *quod* betrifft, lässt sich beobachten dass es, wie in der klassischen Period mit *quia* abwechseln kann aus dem Bedürfnis nach *variatio*, wie z.B. in (16):

(16) Ael. 2,4: *vel quia mortua matre, sed ventre caeso, sit natus, vel quod cum magnis crinibus sit utero parentis effusus.*

Die Verwendung des Konjunktivs lässt sich nicht immer befriedigend erklären. Es gibt sogar Fälle, wo der Text in einem Satz zwischen Konjunktiv und Indikativ schwankt, wie in (17):

(17) AP 2,3: *Pius cognominatus est a senatu, vel quod soceri fessi iam aetatem manu praesente senatu levaret ... , vel quod eos, quos Hadrianus per malam valetudinem occidi iusserat, reservavit.*

Alles in allem erweist sich die Sprache der HA im Vergleich mit anderen Autoren hinsichtlich der Verwendung der Kausalkonjunktionen als traditionell. Sie steht Sueton näher als einem zeitgenössischen Autor wie Ammian, und der Eindruck von Fremdartigkeit oder sogar Schwerfälligkeit ist, wie ich vermute, eher auf lexikalische Novitäten in Kombination mit einer schwer zu verneinenden Seichtheit als auf wirkliche syntaktische Neuerungen zurückzuführen.⁴

Es lohnt sich aber auch achtzugeben auf die interne Distribution der untersuchten Phänomene. Ich habe dazu in erster Linie *quoniam*

⁴ Obwohl es *stricto sensu* nicht zu meinem Thema gehört, notiere ich, dass die Verwendung von *quod* nach den Verbis declarandi et sentiendi an Stelle eines Akkusativus cum Infinitivo in der HA nach der alten Untersuchung von Mayen (1889) nur vierzig Mal vorkommt, während das in Ammian ganz üblich geworden ist.

gewählt, weil diese Konjunktion das meiste zu versprechen schien. In den Hauptviten finden wir *quoniam* nur in (11), am Anfang der berechtigten Interpolation in der Severusvita, (13), einer fiktiven Senatsrede am Schluss der Commodusvita entnommen, und letztlich (14), ein Kuriosum, wo sich unmittelbar in der Wendung *sciendum doctissimis* die Hand des Redaktors verrät. Sonst nirgends.

Wir sind deshalb, wie mir scheint, berechtigt zu sagen dass die Quelle der Hauptviten, sei es der Ignotus von Syme oder Marius Maximus, *quoniam* nicht gebraucht hat und dass die Konjunktion somit als Indiz für Eingriffe des Redaktors in seine Quelle verwendet werden kann. In den Nebenviten und in der Reihe, die mit der Opiliusvita anfängt, ist die Hand des Redaktors bekanntlich unverkennbar. Ich beschränke mich auf zwei Beispiele, (18) und (19), aus der Praefatio zur ersten Nebenvita beziehungsweise aus der *Quadrige tyrannorum*, die evidente Fingerabdrücke des Redaktors sind.

(18) Ael.1,3: *et quoniam nimis pauca dicenda sunt, nec debet prologus inormior esse quam fabula, de ipso iam loquar.*

(19) Q 12,6: *et quoniam minima quaeque iocunda sunt atque habent aliquid gratiae cum leguntur, tacendum non est, quod et ipse gloriatur in quadam sua epistola e.q.s.*

Dasselbe gilt *mutatis mutandis* für *idcirco*, „das eigentliche Lieblingswort der *Historia Augusta*“, wie Lessing schon in 1890 beobachtet hat. Das Lemma in dem *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* bietet einen klaren Überblick von der Verteilung von *idcirco* und *ideo* bei zwölf Autoren aus allen Perioden der lateinischen Literatur. Der einzige Autor, bei dem *idcirco* so stark dominiert wie in der HA, ist Cicero. In der HA wird *idcirco* fast nur gebraucht als Korrelativum mit *quod*, seltener *quia* und vereinzelt *ut* und *ne*. Als ich die Sätze mit *idcirco quod* oder *quia* nacheinander durchlas, hat es mich frappiert, dass es darin oft um Hörensagen geht. So finden wir in den Sätzen (20) bis (26) *Marius Maximus dicit, dicitur*, wieder *dicitur, fabula* und *aliqui putant* und es gibt noch andere Beispiele dieser Art.

(20) H 20,3: *Marius Maximus dicit eum natura crudelem fuisse et idcirco multa pie fecisse, quod timeret, ne sibi idem, quod Domitiano accidit, eveniret.*

(21) AP 4,1: *eo Arrius Antoninus soceri vestigia levans venit atque idcirco ab Hadriano dicitur adoptatus.*

(23) V 10,1: *et dicitur Faustinae socrus dolo aspersis ostreis veneno extinctus esse, idcirco quod consuetudinem, quam cum matre habuerat, filiae prodidisset.*

(24) V 10,2: *quamvis et illa fabula, quae in Marci vita posita est, abhorrens a talis viri vita sit exorta, cum multi etiam uxori eius flagitium mortis adsignent, et idcirco, quod Fabiae nimium indulserat Verus, cuius potentiam uxor Lucilla ferre non posset.*

(25) S 10,6: *aliqui putant idcirco illum Antoninum appellatum, quod Severus ipse in Marci familiam transire voluerit.*

(26) Hel. 2,1: *et aiunt quidam Varii etiam nomen idcirco ei inditum a condiscipulis, quod vario semine, de meretrice utpote, conceptus videretur.*

Ich habe den Eindruck, dass es sich hier um Zusätze handelt, oft, wie in (23) und (26), pikanter Art, womit der Redaktor die wenig aufregenden Hauptviten gleichsam aufpoliert. Obwohl die Aktien von Marius Maximus nicht sehr hoch notiert sind nach dem ikonoklastischen Vortrag von Paschoud in Genf (1999), kann ich mich des Eindrucks nicht erwehren, dass die Art dieser Addenda gut paßt zu dem was wir vom Mythistoricus Marius Maximus lesen. Nicht nur die Skurrilität, sondern auch das Interesse für das *nomen Antoninum* in (25) und für Astrologie in (27)-(28) (*genitura!*) paßt bestens zu Maximus.

(27) G 3,1: *natus est Geta Severo et Viteilio consulibus Mediolanii, etsi aliter alii prodiderunt, vi kal. Iunias ex Iulia, quam idcirco Severus uxorem duxerat, quod eam in genitura habere compererat, ut regis uxor esset.*

(28) S 5,4: *si quidem, ut Marius Maximus dixit in vita Severi, nobilem orientis mulierem Severus, cuius hanc genituram esse conpererat, ut uxor imperatoris esset, adhuc privatus et non magni satis loci duxit uxorem.*

Bemerkenswert ist meines Erachtens auch, dass in (27) die mit *idcirco quod* eingeleitete Mitteilung, Severus habe Julia wegen ihres Horoskops geheiratet, von Marius Maximus herkommt, wie in (28) explizit mitgeteilt wird.

Parturiunt fontes, est natus minusculus mus. Haben wir wiederum Fingerabdrücke gefunden, diesmal vom vielgeschmähten Maximus?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

REVIEW OF: *HISTOIRE AUGUSTE* 4,2 *Vies des deux Auréliens et des deux Galliens*, ed. O. Desbordes, S. Ratti, Paris 2000

Work on the Budé-edition of the *HA* is proceeding slowly but steadily. The five volumes that have been published so far cover 219 of the 550 pages in the Teubner-edition, which amounts to 40 per cent of the complete text. The second half of the *HA*, by which I mean the part that starts with the Life of Macrinus, is far better disclosed than the first. Of the first half we have only the Lives of Hadrian, Aelius and Antoninus Pius (vol. 1,1; Callu 1992), of the second half we have the Lives of Macrinus, Diadumenus and Heliogabalus (vol. 3,1; Turcan 1993) and, apart from the two volumes under discussion, the Lives of Aurelian and Tacitus (5,1; Paschoud 1996).¹ This means that we have part of the work of 'Trebellius Pollio' and all of 'Vopiscus'. Quotation marks are indispensable here, since these Lives were beyond question written by the same anonymous author, whose mannerisms are found in all parts of the *HA* and so may be called the author or, more cautiously, the redactor of the *HA* as a whole. Hereafter I will use the word 'author' for the sake of convenience.

The introduction to volume 4, 2 restricts itself to problems concerning the Lives of Valerian (*Val.*) and Gallienus (*Gall.*), the most important being the lacuna in the *HA*, the reasons for the unmistakable bias *pro* Valerian and *contra* Gallienus, and sources and literary models for these lives. The series of emperors treated in the *HA* is interrupted after the reign of Gordian III (244) and taken up again in the year 260, when Valerian, whose reign started in 253, was taken prisoner by the Persian king Sapor I. So the Lives of Philippus Arabs, Decius and the first part of Valerian are missing, to mention only the most important rulers of these years. It has been suggested that the lacuna was the consequence not of accidental loss in the transmission of the text but of a deliberate omission by the pagan author of the *HA*, who declined to write the Lives of Philippus, allegedly the first Christian emperor, and the disas-

¹ In 2001, Paschoud's edition of the books *Pr.*, *Q* and *Car.* appeared (volume 5,2, see page 209-15)

trous reigns of Decius and Valerian, notorious persecutors of the Christians (Birley 1976). The discussion about the lacuna is in two parts. Desbordes (D.) treats in great detail the information provided by the manuscripts before and after the lacuna and in particular the ascription of the Lives to the *scriptores*. It is by far the most complete description known to me, from which D. convincingly concludes that P and Σ are independent of each other and that the archetype of these manuscripts did not give the name of the *scriptor* of *Val.* and *Gall.* This reinforces the impression, already surmised by Casaubonus in his introductory note to *PN* and Salmasius ad *CIA* 1.1 and *Pr.* 2.7 respectively, that the ascriptions of the Lives to the six *scriptores* is chaotic. Therefore it does not admit of any conclusion as to the genesis and structure of the *HA*, and should be ignored completely. In section VI of the Introduction, also written by D., twenty-five places are listed in which the present edition differs from that of Hohl (p. LXXVI). A few of these changes were proposed in recent studies by Shackleton Bailey 1983 and of Soverini 1981, most are introduced by the editors *suo consilio*.

In his discussion of the lacuna Ratti (R.) puts forward some new and highly interesting arguments for the thesis that the lacuna is the result of a deliberate omission on the part of the author. He points out that Philippus' interdiction of male prostitution is mentioned twice (*Hel.* 32.6 and *AS* 24.4) in earlier Lives. In the same way the emperor's humble birth, his accession to the throne, his tyrannical behaviour, the Secular Games of 248 and the murder of Philippus and his son have all found their places in the Lives of the Gordiani. R. concludes on p. xxiv that by these means 'rien d'essentiel, hormis le christianisme supposé de l'empereur, n'aura été omis.' In other words, by allotting space in the preceding Lives for the information about Philippus that he wanted to impart to his readers, he relieved himself of the obligation to devote a complete biography to this emperor. In a similar fashion the author declines to treat the events of Valerian's reign before and leading up to his capture in 260, but does insert a long and fictional report of a senate meeting (*Val.* 5.4-8), during which Valerian was offered the censorship. He did this as a salute to the otherwise unfortunate emperor, and probably also because the censorship was an issue at the time when the author composed or edited the *HA* (p. 68). I find these arguments convincing and I have the impression that the idea of the deliberate nature of the lacuna, put forward for the first time in modern scholarship by A. R. Birley (1976), is well on its way to becoming the *communis opinio*. I should like to use this occasion to give one further argument for con-

sideration. The figure of Julian is present in the background of more than one *vita* in the *HA*. The best presentation of the relevant evidence is still to be found in N. Baynes, *The Historia Augusta. Its Date and Purpose*. The book had a great impact when it appeared in 1926, but lost much of its influence in the following decades because of the author's mistaken insistence that the *HA* must have been published during or immediately after Julian's reign. Nevertheless it remains a *Fundgrube*. In Baynes' view the Life of Alexander Severus contained many references to Julian and, as we will see, Paschoud has detected similarities between the achievements of the emperor Probus in the *HA* and Julian's record as Caesar in Gaul (see his general Introduction, p. xxiv-xxv and the commentary, p. 108). If indeed Julian's reign remained a hotly debated issue long after his death, it is easy to understand why a pagan author declined to write the history of Valerian, a notorious enemy of Christianity, whose life ended in disaster in Persia. It would inevitably have reminded his pagan readers of Julian's embarrassing failure in the same theatre of war and his untimely death on the battlefield. Christian readers, on the other hand, would have found here further proof that the enemies of Christ would meet a terrible end.

In section III of the Introduction R. explains why Valerian and Gallienus are depicted *en blanc et noir* by 'Trebellius Pollio'. The reasons are partly of a religious, partly of a political nature. Valerian was known as the eighth persecutor of the Christians, whereas Gallienus introduced a tolerant policy towards them. On a political level Gallienus reduced the career possibilities of the senators drastically, which made him of course highly unpopular with the author, whose pro-senatorial bias is undisputed. On p. xli R. discusses interesting new numismatic material suggesting that Gallienus' wife Salonina was a Christian.

Less convincing is section IV: *Les allusions littéraires dans la Vita Gallieni*. I must confess to feeling uncomfortable when I am quoted in support of the alleged 'vaste culture littéraire de l'auteur de l'*HA*' (p. xlvI). In my small contribution ('The author's literary culture', chapter 9 of this book), I had argued in favour of a certain restraint in establishing links between the *HA* and other works of literature, and tentatively formulated some minimum requirements that should be met in order to justify, terms like 'borrowing' ('emprunt'), 'allusion', 'reference', 'quotation'. Too often single words, stereotyped expressions and parallellisms in thought without corresponding verbal parallellism are offered as proof of intertextual connection. In my opinion the new 'rapprochements' made by R. between *Gall.* and Juvenal are not cogent. Some ex-

amples: Gallienus called his field boots *reticuli*. The same, admittedly rare, word occurs in Juvenal 2.96 meaning 'hair-net', as worn by effeminate dandies. So what? The thematic parallélism between Juvenal's 5th Satire and *Gall.* 16-17 is not supported by verbal parallels. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the alleged imitation or parody of Jerome *Ep.* 22 in *Gall.* Again verbal parallels are either lacking or unconvincing. When Jerome writes *homo ventri magis oboediens quam deo* (*Ep.* 22.10) and *Gall.* 16.1 has the phrase *natus abdomini et voluptatibus*, my conclusion would be that both the authors knew and varied Cic. *Pis.* 41 *natus abdomini suo, non laudi et gloriae*, mentioned in the commentary *ad loc.*, no more and no less. I must admit that I am also sceptical where Ammianus Marcellinus is concerned. R. is of the opinion (p. LV) that the letter of Velsolus to Sapor I, with which *Val.* begins, contains several allusions to the letter of Sapor II to Constantius as presented by the historian in *RG* 17.5.3-8. Some of them had already been postulated by Syme (1968). R. adds that the *praeteritio* in *Val.* 1.5 *de longioribus exemplis et fortasse inferioribus* (to which I will return) *nihil dico* is a reaction to *RG* 17.5.14 *in proeliis quibusdam raro rem titubasse Romanam*. With this *praeteritio* and by mentioning the defeats inflicted on the Romans by the Gauls, the Carthaginians and Mithridates, the biographer, according to R., tries to outdo the historian in providing exact historical information, as part of what he calls 'le débat entre les deux auteurs sur la primauté des genres biographique ou annalistique' (p. LVI). I think the textual foundation for speculations of this type is insufficient and that R. has been tempted into 'Hineininterpretierung'. In this case too, I think the author has looked to a classical model for his inspiration, viz. Mithridates' letter to Arsaces as presented in *Sal. Hist.* 4.69, duly mentioned by R. in his commentary.

Turning now to the text and its translation, I find hardly anything to criticize. The apparatus criticus is a model of its kind, the text constitution is exemplary and the translation is, as far as I can judge, clear, exact and on the same modest stylistic level as the original text. In *Gall.* 3.2 P's reading *consentientis* for the nominative plural is changed to *consentientes* in conformity with classical usage and the decisions made in similar circumstances by Callu and Paschoud. Note, however, that the latter has kept the reading of PΣ *omnis Orientalis exercitus* (n. pl.) in *Pr.* 10.1. In *Gall.* 3.4 the punctuation of the Teubner-edition is improved on by deleting the comma after *Macriani milites*, which results in a clear correction of Chastagnol's translation. In *Val.* 1.5 R. translates the sentence *de longioribus exemplis et fortasse inferioribus* (*interioribus* PΣ) as

follows: 'Je ne dis rien d'exemples trop longs à exposer et peut-être moins probants.' In his commentary he remarks: 'la lecture *veterioribus* (opposition *externa exempla / vetera*) aurait pour elle [...] les parallèles avec Cicéron, *Tusc.* 1.33 (*et vetera et externa*) et *Leg.* 3.21 (*cur aut vetera aut aliena proferam* etc.)'. In my opinion this is exactly the reason why on the one hand *interioribus* in the meaning 'further away' should be kept, for which R. gives a number of parallels, and *longioribus* should be interpreted as 'in the more distant past', for which see *ThLL* VII. 1636.71 sqq. and expressions like *longe repetere*.

These are minor details.² The commentary offers a wealth of information and provides the reader with the historical background necessary for a correct appreciation of the historical narrative and the peculiar way in which the author chose to present it. All in all, this is a highly valuable contribution to the Budé-edition of the *HA*.³

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² I noted very few printing errors: p. 37, line 5 *Vuas* (*Uuas*); p. 77, l. 33 *censoris* (*censores*); p. 90, l. 20 αὐτὸν (αὐτὸν), 167, last line *Ammiami* (*Ammiani*).

³ This review is complemented by Ph. Bruggisser for the second half of the commentary (*AntTard* 13 (2005) 435 sqq.) (note eds.).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

REVIEW OF: *HISTOIRE AUGUSTE* 5,¹ *Vies d'Aurélien et de Tacite*, ed. F. Paschoud, Paris 1996

This is the third volume to appear in the Budé-edition of the *Historia Augusta*. It was preceded by volume I, 1 (*Hadrianus, Aelius, Antoninus Pius*) edited by J.-P. Callu in 1992 and III, 1 (*Opilius Macrinus, Diadumenus, Heliogabalus*) edited by R. Turcan in 1993. What strikes the reader immediately in the new volume is the increase in the number and length of the notes. The Latin text and the translation are followed by extensive notes that amount to a running commentary on the text as a whole. The space at the bottom of the pages with the Latin text facing the *apparatus criticus* is used by Paschoud (P.) for shorter notes, mainly about textual and linguistic problems. The result is a book that is packed with information but at the same time easy to consult because of the logical subdivision of the commentary in numbered sections. The corresponding chapters and sections of the text are indicated after the section numbers. In this way the structure of the Lives is clearly indicated and the reader has no difficulty finding the notes on individual chapters and sections.

The first volume in the series contained an 'Introduction Générale' by Callu of a hundred pages, in which he discussed 'la genèse' and 'la réception' of the HA. P. fully accepts Callu's account of the textual transmission, but differs from his predecessor with regard to the various stages in the genesis of the collection, so much so that P. has decided to write his own version of it. Instead of the extremely complicated genesis in four successive stages that Callu outlined in his Introduction, P., like Syme, sees only one major incision, namely between the end of the primary Lives with the *vita Caracalli* and the beginning of the *vita Opilii Macrini*, clearly marked as a fresh start by a programmatic preface in which the author states his intention to write *vitae illorum principum seu tyrannorum sive Caesarum qui non diu imperarunt* (OM 1.1). The correspondences between the Lives from OM to the end of the collection that have been pointed out in the detailed studies of Wölfflin, Hönn and Hohl¹ are so numerous that one cannot but accept the thesis that they are the work

¹ Wölfflin 1891; Hönn 1911; Hohl 1911; Hohl 1912.

of one author, parading under different names. P., in accordance with the modern orthodoxy regarding the *HA*, is willing to go even further and accepts Dessau's thesis that the *HA* as a whole is the work of one author, although he expresses himself very cautiously on this point (p. XIII): 'j'incline pour ma part à penser que la collection, sous sa forme actuelle, est apparemment l'oeuvre d'un seul auteur'.

That leaves unexplained, in my opinion, the obvious differences in style and composition between on the one hand the primary lives and the rest of the *HA* and on the other hand the differences between insertions like e.g. *MA* 18.4–19 or *S* 17.5–22 and the rest of these primary lives. It is more adequate, I would suggest, to postulate a single redactor of the *HA* who used an existing series of lives of the great emperors of the second century up to and including Caracalla (leaving his fingerprints in the form of these insertions also in this part of the collection), rather than a single author who wrote the *HA* from beginning to end. But I have to admit that in the case of the *HA* the choice between 'redactor' and 'author' is in the last resort arbitrary. (See chapter 14 of this book.)

On the working method of the author P. offers a very interesting suggestion on p. xxxv–xxvi. P. pictures the author as not only advancing towards the end of his work, but also repeatedly retracing his steps in order to modify and to add to what he has already written. That is how he interprets 'le dense réseau de relations' between the lives by 'Vopiscus', the secondary lives and the lives of Elagabalus and Alexander Severus (to which I would add the insertions into the primary lives). P. compares the biographer in this respect to Proust, who never stopped adding to what he had already written of his vast novel, scribbling between the lines and if necessary sticking his 'paperoles' on the margins of his notebooks. It is a suggestion that appeals easily to a person used to manipulating texts on a computer, but one wonders if even the less sophisticated working methods of Proust could have been applied by an author writing on papyrus?

As regards the date of composition, or rather completion, of the work, P. argues for 'une fourchette ... entre 395–397 d'une part et 404–406 de l'autre' (p. XIII). This, too, is in accordance with the modern orthodox view. There is, however, a striking difference between the two termini. The *terminus post quem* rests on excellent proof, whereas the arguments P. puts forward for the *terminus ante quem* are less conclusive. According to P., the passage in the *vita Aureliani* 18.5–21.4 about the consultation of the Sibylline books cannot have been written after the destruction of the books by Stilicho. I fail to see why a pagan author could not at a later date have incorporated this report out of a feeling of nostalgia for the old days

in which a good emperor like Aurelian ordered the senate to consult the *libri fatales*. P.'s second argument is taken from John (1976), who argued that not just Constantinople, but all the imperial residences of late antiquity are treated with condescension in the *HA*, in order to emphasize their inferiority in comparison with Rome. The only city to escape a similar treatment is Ravenna, which suggests that it was not considered a rival by Roman senators. This would point to a date before 404, when Honorius made Ravenna his residence. In my opinion this is a precarious *argumentum ex silentio* with as little cogency as the argument based on the Sibylline books. The problem of the *terminus ante quem* therefore remains open.

P. sums up his views about the sources of the last section of the *HA*, written by 'Vopiscus', as follows (p. xli): 'je partirai donc de l'hypothèse de travail que les informations historiques sérieuses étrangères à la tradition de l'«Enmannsche Kaisergeschichte» proviennent de Nicomache Flavien.' P. shares the opinion of Bleckmann that the lost annals of Nicomachus Flavianus were among the sources for the Greek tradition represented by i.a. Petrus Patricius.² Accordingly, P. goes beyond the Greek authors mentioned by Barnes (1978, 75) as a source for the *A*, and substitutes for them the name of Nicomachus Flavianus. As a result, his list of the sources used in *A* on p. 12 is very simple and contains, apart from Dexippus, who is mentioned as the source of *A* 18.1, only the names of the EKG and Nicomachus Flavianus, occasionally provided with a question mark. If Boerhaave's tenet *simplex sigillum veri* is anything to go by in the case of a slippery character like the author of the *HA*, this is a distinct improvement. What struck me, was the contrast between P.'s willingness to accept Nicomachus, about whose work we know next to nothing, as a source for parts of the *HA*, and his extreme scepticism vis-à-vis Marius Maximus. It may be true, as Hönn (1911, 47) had seen, that none of the quotations from Marius Maximus in the *vita Alexandri* can be trusted, but that does not alter the fact that in the earlier lives Marius Maximus is sometimes quoted as the source for perfectly acceptable information. Another reason not to place him in the same class as Cordus and other 'bogus authors' is the fact that he is mentioned independently both in Ammianus (28.4.14) and in a scholion on Juv. 4.53. For a recent and exhaustive review of the problems surrounding Marius Maximus see now Birley's article in *ANRW* 34.3 (1997), who concludes that 'it be-

² Bleckmann 1992. The argument is complicated, but see the helpful discussion of Bleckmann's book by P. himself in *AntTard* 2 (1994) 71-82.

comes possible to proceed on the assumption that Marius Maximus was, after all, the principal source for the lives from Hadrian to Elagabalus in the *Historia Augusta*' (p. 2714).

P's account of the sources for *A* is also more economical than earlier accounts in that he maintains that the author consulted only the EKG itself, not Aurelius Victor, as Syme (1971, 238) and others had suggested. At this point I am not convinced by the arguments P. puts forward on p. 252. If moralizing and generalizing remarks are the hall-mark of Aurelius Victor, we may certainly read the conclusion of his chapter on Aurelian as his personal observation: *Quod factum* (sc. that A.'s reign was followed by an *interregnum*) *praecipue edocuit cuncta in se orbis modo verti, nihilque accidere quod rursum naturae vis ferre nequeat aevi spatio; adhuc virtutibus principum res attolli facile vel afflictas, easque firmiores praeceps vitiis dari* (35.13-14). This remark, in my opinion, has inspired the opening sections of the speech of Aurelius Tacitus in the senate (*A* 41.5-14, in particular §7) about the ups and downs in Roman history: *respirare certe post infelicitatem Valeriani, post Gallieni mala, imperante Claudio, coeperat nostra res publica; at eadem reddita fuerat Aureliano toto penitus orbe vincente*, a theme to which the author returned in his preface to the *vita Cari*.

One must be both a Latinist and a native speaker of French to be able to pronounce a judgment of P's translation with anything approaching authority. Not being a native speaker of French, I give my impression with some hesitation. The translation is a pleasure to read. It is lively, witty at times and always clear. In fact, those readers who keep their eyes permanently on the left pages will come away with the impression that they have been reading an author who is moving at a brisk pace and is, at times, truly eloquent. The French is, in other words, slightly better than the original, which is at times sloppy and flat. Where the Latin text has: *Vidimus proxime consulatum Furii Placidi tanto ambitu in Circo editum ut non praemia dari aurigis sed patrimonia viderentur* (*A* 15.5) P. translates: 'Nous avons vu récemment célébrer au Cirque le consulat de Furius Placidus avec un luxe *si tapageur* que ce n'étaient *pas des primes, mais des patrimoines* qu'on semblait offrir aux conducteurs de char'. On the one hand he manages to keep the pun *praemia* – *patrimonia*, on the other he substitutes for the nondescript *tanto* the word 'tapageur' for which I had to consult my dictionary. In the life of Tacitus, *Tac.* 13.2, P. translates *bonos malosve* 'que ce fussent des hommes de bien ou des crapules', which is decidedly more colourful than the original text. On the whole P. offers a completely reliable translation and the reader will be grateful for his de-

cision to give absolute priority to readability 'qui doit à mon avis primer sur une fidélité pointilleuse appliquée à des défaillances' (p. XLVIII). There are very few places where I disagree with P.'s interpretation. One of them is in the speech on the occasion of the adoption, or rather the *adrogatio*, of Aurelian (A 14.6). The speaker, 'Ulpus Crinitus', says: *Hoc igitur quod Cocceius Nerva in Traiano adoptando, quod Ulpus Traianus in Hadriano, quod Hadrianus in Antonino et ceteri deinceps proposita suggestionem fecerunt, in adrogando Aureliano ... censui esse referendum*. Here the author is showing off his knowledge of ancient customs, possibly based on the chapter in Gellius on the subject according to which the *adrogatio* took place before the *comitia curiata* after the *pontifices* had examined the case (*adrogationes non temere nec inexplorate committuntur; nam comitia arbitris pontificibus praebentur*, Gel. NA 5.19.6) and given their consent. The emperor Valerian, who presides over the ceremony, is cast in the role of the people in a meeting of the *comitia curiata* and is addressed in legal terms: *Iube igitur ut lege agatur* (cf. Gel. 5.19.9 *velitis iubeatis, uti L. Valerius L. Titio ... iure legeque filius siet*). In this context the words *proposita suggestionem* refer to the consent given by the priests and should, I think, be rendered 'after a proposal had been presented' (sc. by the priests), rather than 'selon le modèle établi' (P.) or 'according to the precedent thus established' (Magie). That the author is thinking of the part played by the priests is also suggested by the speech of the praetor urbanus Fulvius Sabinus about the consultation of the Sibylline Books in A 19.1: *Referimus ad vos, patres conscripti, pontificum suggestionem et Aureliani litteras, quibus iubetur ut inspiciantur fatales libri*, where the *pontifices* are apparently confused with the *xv-viri*. Furthermore, I would not hesitate to interpret *verum est* in Tac. 7.5 as referring to the fact that an alternative version existed of the emperor's whereabouts at the time of his inauguration (a possibility only tentatively put forward by P. on p. 274, n. 68) rather than as a statement about the reliability of the alternative version itself. What the author feels obliged to report (*tacendum non est*) is expressed by the following AcI *plerosque in litteras rettulisse*.

The *pièce de résistance* of this edition is of course the commentary. It is, as might have been expected after P.'s Zosimus edition, an exemplary achievement. In his notes P. repeatedly pays attention to lexical, syntactic and semantic aspects of the Latin text with numerous references to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, which are important in themselves for our appreciation of the stylistic level of the HA and its place in the development of the Latin language. Apart from that, they offer an insight into what P. has termed the 'réseau de relations' between different segments of

the work, the 'fingerprints' left by the final redactor, as I would call them.³ P. also has several notes on prose rhythm in the more elevated passages, especially in the numerous speeches and letters adorning the two lives, as well as a full discussion of the metrical problems in the soldiers' song in A 6.5 (note 2.2.2). In his constitution of the text P. has taken into account the recent studies by Shackleton Bailey (1983) and Soverini (1981). He tends to be on the conservative side, but always states his reasons for his decisions clearly in the notes.⁴ In short, the philologist finds much to suit him in this commentary.

The same goes for the historian. The best specimen of a historical exposition in this book, in my opinion, is P.'s treatment of Aurelian's campaign against Zenobia of Palmyra (A 22–31). It is one of the comparatively few passages which contain valuable factual material in these lives. P. provides the necessary background information, an analysis of the structure of the report and a detailed discussion of the 'Quellenfrage'. As the basic source for this episode he names Nicomachus Flavianus, who appears in person in the course of the story as the translator into Greek of a letter in Syrian sent by Zenobia and who is in all probability evoked by the reference to the biography of Apollonius of Tyana in A 24.8.

However, given the fictitious and playful character of most of A and nearly all of *Tac.*, what we need above all in a commentator of these lives is a sense of humour and love of literature. Here again, we are well served by P. Indeed, I know of no modern critic of the HA, apart from Syme, with such an intimate familiarity with the workings of the eccentric mind of the biographer. Very instructive is his observation on p. 142 that the

³ P. expresses the same idea with an amusing culinary metaphor on p. 284, n. 3.1.0, and stresses the importance of these observations for an understanding of the genesis of the work. With regard to the primary lives, however, it is essential to distinguish the insertions from the main text. In his note 2.3.9 on A 15.1–2 P. discusses the expression *longum est*, which is found, we are told, 19 times in the HA, 11 times in 'Vopiscus', three times in 'Pollio', once in each of the lives P, OM, AS and Max. 'La seule biographie de meilleure qualité où on la rencontre – une fois – est *Sept. Seu.*' The unwary reader might interpret this statement as evidence for the linguistic homogeneity of the HA, including the 'primary lives'. But the instance of *longum est* in the life of Severus happens to be in 17.5, right at the beginning of the passage that Dessau and Leo (1901, 286 n.1) have identified as a borrowing from Aurelius Victor and is adduced by P. himself on p. xv as one of his main arguments against the traditional date of the HA.

⁴ In A 5.5 P. mentions the suggestion of O. Desbordes to read *ab eo <in eo> templo*. I would prefer to read *in eo templo*, because there doesn't seem to be any point in stressing that Sol was worshipped by Aurelian. I don't think *nunc te cum requirere potuissem* (A 11.1) can be kept. By contrast, there is in my opinion nothing wrong with the text of in A 32.4 *pacatis Oriente, Gallis atque undique terris*. The alternative put forward by P., viz. *pacatis Oriente, Gallis atque undique terrarum* seems to me much more dubious. Helm's *ubique terrarum victor* is perfect, but far from the ms. tradition.

author 'travaille par association d'idées et réflexe conditionnée: le même contexte appelle comme mécaniquement le même chapelet d'éléments.' Good examples of the author's associative method (if that is the word) are given on pages 30, n. 35 (one reminiscence of Cic. *Phil.* leading to another), 282 (association from *capital* in *Tac* 9.3 to *capita* in the next section), 284 (association in the same chapter from the *Kalendae Ianuariae* and the *Parilia* to the accession of office of the ordinary and the suffect consuls) and 295-296 (two reminiscences from Juvenal that have found their way into the lives of Aurelian and Tacitus). Of special interest are the signs that point to the acquaintance of our author with the work of Ammianus Marcellinus. P. accepts my argumentation that the story of Aurelian's adoption by 'Ulpus Crinitus' betrays familiarity with Ammianus' *Res gestae* 31⁵ and points out another similarity between this passage in A and Ammianus. In A 13.2-3 the emperor Valerian thanks Aurelian for delivering the state from the power of the Goths and Aurelian is richly rewarded for his prowess: *cape igitur tibi pro rebus gestis coronas murales quatuor, coronas vallares quinque, coronas navales duas, coronas civicas duas, hastas puras decem* and so on and so forth. P. is certainly right in supposing (p. 96) that the author's expertise in the field of military decorations is derived from books rather than inscriptions. As a likely source he suggests Gellius, who devotes a whole chapter (NA 5.6) to the subject. The author's intention, according to P., may have been to honour Julian, who was the first after the Severi to distribute decorations to his men. That is what Ammianus tells us in 24.4.24 (capture of Maozamalcha): *enituerunt hi, qui fecere fortissime, obsidionalibus coronis donati* and 24.6.15 (not 24.6.16): *quos stabili mente aliquid clarum fecisse ipse arbiter perspexit, navalibus donavit coronis et civicis et castrensibus* stressing that this was done *veterum more*. Up to this point P. may well be right, but I am afraid his next step takes him too far. The lists in A and Ammianus, P. observes, have the *coronae navales* and *civicae* in common. The *castrenses* of Ammianus were probably identified by the biographer with

⁵ See Den Hengst 1987. One detail had escaped my attention at the time. The legal terminus technicus *lege agere* in A 14.7, quoted above, evokes Julian's hasty action on the first of January 362, described by Ammianus 22.7.1 in the following terms: *deinde Mamertino ludos edente circenses manu mittendis ex more inductis per admissionum proximum ipse (Julian) lege agi ocius dixerat ut solebat*. The presence in this context of the *proximus admissionum* may well have inspired the biographer to create Acholius, *qui magister admissionum Valeriani principis fuit* and who had described the ceremony in the 9th book of his *acta* (A 12.4). One even begins to wonder whether *solere* in A 15.1 *adoptio, ut solebat impleta*, 15.6 *sed nos, ut solemus, hanc quoque rem in medio relinquimus*, 17.1 *quam ego, ut soleo, immo ut alios annalium scriptores fecisse video, fidei causa inserendam putavi* is not prompted by Ammianus *ut solebat*.

the *vallares* on the authority of Gel. NA 5.6.17: *ea corona* (the *castrensis*) *insigne valli habet*. The one decoration in Ammianus that is not in A is the *obsidionalis*. Now Ammianus was certainly wrong in mentioning this crown, because it used to be awarded to a general who had relieved a besieged city, not to the first soldier to enter a beleaguered city, who was entitled to the *corona muralis*. P. suggests tentatively that ‘Vopiscus’ ‘corrigerait discrètement l’erreur commise dans l’attribution des décorations après la prise de Mahozamalcha.’ If Ammianus had mentioned the four crowns in one breath, as the biographer does, I would have been willing to follow P. As it is, there are two chapters between the *obsidionalis* and the other three, which makes the parallel between Ammianus and the HA far less striking. If we assume, as I do, that the biographer had a literary parallel in mind, I would propose as a candidate the ‘Roman Achilles’, Sicinius Dentatus, about whom Gellius says (NA 2.11.2): (*dicitur*) *coronis donatus esse aureis octo, obsidionali una, muralibus tribus, civicis quattuordecim* (and a handful of other decorations besides).

As Syme remarked on the last page of his *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta*, ‘to be much in the company of the *Historia Augusta* is to risk the fatal exhilaration that befell the guests of Africanus, *poculis amplioribus madefacti*’. P. has escaped the danger of sinking into the Serbonian bog, but now and again the quirky humour of the biographer becomes contagious. This has resulted in notes that are a wonderful pastiche of the biographer’s manner. I gladly confess that a few times P.’s notes made me laugh out loud, something that hasn’t happened to me for a long time when reading a commentary. I will not spoil the reader’s fun by repeating P.’s jokes and would advise him to read, preferably on the 25th of March, P.’s note on the biographer Suetonius Optatianus on p. 293 and 294, which ends: ‘Si quelqu’un désire tout savoir sur ce procédé, qu’il lise Théodore Dessau, qui a traité ce point de manière très détaillée.’

To sum up, this is an admirable edition of these two lives and one looks forward to the next volume with the highly entertaining vitae of Probus, the *Quadrigae tyrannorum* and Carus, Carinus and Numerianus.⁶ The *manes* of Johannes Straub, to whose memory the book has been dedicated, must be very pleased with this votive offering. One wonders what its impact will be on the projected series of commentaries for which the groundwork has been laid for more than thirty-five years now in the *His-*

⁶ I noticed very few mistakes or misprints: p. iv Notes in: Notes on; 68 *mentire*: *mentiri*; 104 305-36: 305-306; 295 *revertere*: *reverti*; 296 *faceretur*: *fieret*. The sentence *indice confecto saltat scriptor pede laeto* below the index on p. 336 is funny, but Highet’s (1954) *indice completo saltat scriptor pede laeto* at the end of his index to *Juvenal the Satirist* is even funnier.

toria Augusta Colloquia, in which Straub played such an important role. I can't help thinking of what Suetonius tells us about the commentaries of Julius Caesar (*Iul.* 56.2): *dum voluit alios habere parata, unde sumerent qui vellent scribere historiam, ineptis gratum fortasse fecit, qui illa volent calamistris inurere, sanos quidem homines a scribendo deterruit.*

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

REVIEW OF: *HISTOIRE AUGUSTE* 5,2

Vies de Probus, Firmus, Saturninus, Proculus et Bonose, Carus, Numérien, et Carin, ed. F. Paschoud, Paris 2001

People outside the *pomerium* of Paris are not supposed to know by whom and on what criteria the Lives of the *HA* have been distributed among the scholars who work together in producing the Budé-edition. One thing is certain: Paschoud (P.) must have been content about being assigned the last part containing the *Opera omnia* of 'Vopiscus'. He has without doubt received the best bits, since all students of the *HA*, that puzzling, fascinating and maddening collection of biographies, will agree that the Lives of 'Vopiscus' show us the author 'at the peak of his performance', to quote Syme. The readers on their part may consider themselves lucky in having P. as their guide in this remote corner of classical studies, which has been characterized by great scholars as a morass, a sewer, a dunghill or a garden of delights, but in my opinion can best be described as a labyrinth. In my review of P's edition of vol. 5,1 of the present series I have expressed my admiration not only for P's complete mastery of the subject, but also for his ability to enter into the mind of the eccentric author of the *HA*.¹ I do not intend to repeat my earlier observations here, but will indicate only those elements that struck me as new in vol. 5,2.

In the first place P's tone, both in his General Introduction and in the commentary, is much more personal and outspoken. I am thinking in particular of his polemic with Barnes, Burgess and Cameron, whom he accuses of neglecting or keeping under wraps recent work by French and German scholars on the sources for the history of the fourth century. On this point he has been answered by Barnes in a review of *CR* 54 (2004) 120-4. In the commentary too, one finds occasional digs at colleagues and personal remarks. As a rule they are inoffensive and have the useful function of keeping the reader awake or making him laugh. I for one am grateful for asides like the following (after the remark that the usurper Firmus used to go for a ride on an ostrich): 'Les touristes qui aujourd'hui visitent les fermes d'élevage d'autruches à Oudtshoorn

¹ Den Hengst 1998 and chapter 17 of this book.

(Afrique du Sud) peuvent assister à une course d'autruches montées, et ont même la possibilité d'imiter personnellement Firmus s'ils ne craignent pas de se rompre le cou en tombant par terre au milieu des fientes de ces étranges montures' (p. 231).

In vol. 5,1, P. regularly referred to Nicomachus Flavianus as the source for a particular passage. In the present volume he is more cautious and speaks of the 'Leoquelle', while insisting that he is still convinced that this 'Leoquelle' is identical with Nicomachus Flavianus. He must have done this in order to forestall the easy criticism that we know nothing about the *Annales* of this historian. The present reviewer is unable to pass judgment on this problem.

Also new is section 3 of the general introduction on the names 'Trebellius Pollio' and 'Flavius Vopiscus Syracusanus'. On the basis of recent studies by A. R. Birley and Reekmans,² P. makes a very strong case for L. Trebellius Fides, *tribunus plebis* in the same year as Asinius Pollio (47 a. C.), and C. Iulius Caesar Strabo Vopiscus, the expert on humour and wit in Cicero, *De orat.* II, as the sources of inspiration for the author of the *HA* when he chose the names of his *scriptores*.

The present volume contains several references to the article by White (1967) on the authorship of the *HA*. Since White takes as his point of departure the division of the *HA* over the six *scriptores* mentioned in the mss., which as I remarked earlier, is chaotic and should be ignored altogether, I do not think his arguments for single authorship are solid. Under the name of Spartianus we find lives as different from each other as *H* and *PN*, and the same applies to *MA* and *ClA*, both ascribed to Capitolinus. On p. 229 P. quotes two of these themes that are found in all *scriptores* as proof of single authorship, after which he continues: 'On notera par ailleurs que, dans les deux listes de références qui précèdent, seules des *Vies* tardives ou secondaires apparaissent.' The absence of references to the primary Lives is exactly what makes me hesitate to accept single authorship.

It is my impression that in this volume even more attention is paid to stylistic and linguistic matters than in the preceding volume. Especially striking are the numerous references to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* and the frequent remarks on the *cursus*, for which the studies of Zernial are constantly quoted. As in 5,1, P. has counted the number of lines in every *vita* that are *not* based on the author's imagination. On p. 301 of the present volume he gives the percentages for all the Lives of

² Birley 2005; Reekmans 1997 (esp. p. 176).

'Vopiscus': A 26.6%, Tac. 15.3, Pr. 16.8, Q. 6 (!), Car. 17.2. It would be an interesting exercise (but far more difficult) to make such a calculation for the so-called *Hauptviten* of the emperors of the second century. It is my guess that it would result in a mirror image.

There has been much inconclusive speculation about the 'Tendenz' of the HA as a whole. In my opinion section 4 of the General Introduction, under the heading: 'L'HA comme allégorie historique', is an important and enlightening contribution to this discussion. P. suggests that in Car. the author, for once in a more serious vein, holds out a message of hope to his pagan contemporaries. Just as Rome was in despair after the death of Probus (behind whom P. discerns Julian), but recovered under Diocletian, so Rome will recover from the loss of Julian and witness a new revival: 'un nouveau Dioclétien peut surgir, l'expérience dicte même qu'il doit bientôt surgir' (p. xxv).

Turning now to the text and the translation, I would like to single out a few places where P. deviates from Hohl's Teubner-text and make a few comments that occurred to me while reading through these Lives. In the important programmatic statement Pr. 2.6-7: *Illud tantum contestatum volo me et rem scripsisse, quam, si quis voluerit, honestius eloquio celsiore demonstret, et mihi quidem id animi fuit ut non Sallustios ... imitarer, sed Marium Maximum* etc., P. follows Baehrens in deleting both *et*, because sections 6 and 7 do not express two distinct thoughts, but 'le paragr. 7 reprend l'idée du paragr. 6 en la précisant par des exemples' (p. 55). This I doubt. In section 6 the author states that he provides material for a 'real' historian, to write a history in the appropriate elevated style (a statement repeated in the last section of the whole work), whereas in section 7 he presents himself as a biographer in the tradition of Marius Maximus *e tutti quanti*, as opposed to the historians. The thoughts are certainly related, but not identical. There is a similar problem in Q 1.1: *Nam et Suetonius ... Antonium, Vindicem tacuit ... et Marius Maximus, qui Avidium Marci temporibus, Albinum et Nigrum Severi non suis propriis libris, sed alienis innexuit*. P. calls this an anacolouthon and says that *qui* introducing *innexuit* is redundant. In my opinion there is nothing wrong here, since *tacuit* serves also as the main verb with the second subject Marius Maximus. In Pr. 4.2 *in tanto habeas honore quantum virtutes eius et merita pro debito mentis splendore desiderant*, P. proposes *menti* and translates: 'la position brillante qui est due à son caractère'. For *splendor* in this meaning he refers on p. 67 to T 13.3 *ducatus splendore sublimi*. There, however, the brilliant position is expressed by the gen. inversus *ducatus* and the phrase as a whole is the

equivalent of *ducatu splendido et sublimi*. I would prefer the drastic remedy of Casaubonus, who deleted the whole prepositional phrase as a gloss on *quantum virtutes et merita desiderant*.

In *Pr.* 16.5 we are told that Probus invaded the territory of the barbarians in Isauria *vel per terrorem vel urbanitatem*, where P. interprets *urbanitas* plausibly as 'une ruse'. The phrase looks suspiciously like a variation on Ammianus' *ad quos vel vi vel ratione sedandos* on the expedition of the *comes* Lauricius against the Isaurians (*RG* 19.13.2). The episode in *Pr.* 17.4-6 about the contacts between king Narseus and Probus, embellished by a letter from Narseus, certainly recalls the correspondence between Sapor II and Constantius in Ammianus, *RG* 17.5. Reading the *Vita Probi* with P.'s suggestion in mind that Probus is a double or a predecessor of Julian (p. xxiv), one is reminded of the apocryphal story, reported in Socrates 3.21.4, that the Persian king sent envoys after Julian had laid siege to Ctesiphon, and offered him part of his kingdom in exchange for peace. Julian, however, τὰς ἱκεσίας Περσῶν ἀπεκρούσατο (cf. *superbius acceptos ... remisit*).

P.'s commentary is rich, lucid and often brilliant. The index is very helpful, because not only persons and places listed, but also *Leitmotive* and idiosyncrasies of the author. It is tempting to quote instances of the many original analyses, new insights and intertextual connections suggested in these pages, but the reader should go and look for himself: *lector, intende; laetaberis*. A reviewer, however, is not a panegyrist, but rather an historian, who mentions the *bona* and the *vitia* (usually with a penchant for the latter).³ As in Ratti's commentary on *Val.* and *Gall.*, there are cases in which P. is, in my opinion, too easily inclined to assume intertextual relations. P. calls people who are more cautious or sceptical on this point than himself 'les positivistes, qui n'admettent pas que l'auteur de l'*HA* travaille par associations mentales, peut-être en partie inconscientes' (p. 151). Far be it from me to deny that this is how the mind of our author works, but I think his critics should not indulge as lightheartedly as he does in free association, and should try to give solid arguments before postulating intertextual connections. I think P. would agree with this in principle, since he repeatedly rejects 'rapprochements' made by others, e.g. Chastagnol (p. 228 and 382), Schwartz (p. 258) and Syme (p. 259). In order to explain my reservations more

³ I noted the following printing errors: p. 12, l. 9 conjointement; p. 148, l. 26 inépéralisme; p. 237, l. 39 πεφώκασι (πεφύκασι); p. 238, l. 3 *epigrammatariii*, p. 255, l. 16 Voss (Vos ou Vossius), p. 259, l. 22 plutôt (plus tôt); p. 299, l. 15 Apollinaire (Apollinaris), unless this is a little joke in the style of the *HA*.

clearly, I choose two ‘rapprochements’ that I find convincing and two that seem to me less well-founded. At p. 155 P. defends the connection between Symm., *Or.* 2 and *Pr.* 4.4-6, already postulated by Norden, with a series of five arguments. Such a list of convergent indications carries conviction. The same applies to the connection P. discerns between *Pr.* 21 and Jerome’s 26th letter, since in both texts we find not just the phrase *sermo pedestris* and a thematic parallelism, but also and in the same context the rare verb (*ef*)*florescere*.

On the other hand, I am not convinced of the ‘actualisation’ of the story in Q 3.4-6 about the ivory tusks offered by Carinus to a lady who made a bed out of them which she used as a *ministerium libidinis*. Here P. postulates a connection (‘Il me paraît hors de doute’, p. 220) to the story in Zosimus 5.38.3 about Serena, wife of Stilicho, who stole a precious stone belonging to a statue of Rhea. It is, of course, entirely possible that the author had this scandalous incident in mind, but certainty is a different matter. Apart from that, the parallelism between the two stories is incomplete. In Q the criticism is directed, not so much against the mysterious lady as against Carinus, whereas in Zosimus’ story it is Serena herself who is put in the pillory.

My second example is the discussion of Carus’ *patria* (*Car.* 4-5.3). This quasi-learned discussion is thought to have been inspired by Suetonius’ much more sophisticated inquiry into the birthplace of Caligula (*Cal.* 8). Festy ingeniously suggested that Aurelius Victor had put our author on the track. Following in Chastagnol’s footsteps P. suggests that the alternatives enumerated in *Car.* 4-5.3, viz. Rome, Illyricum, Africa, Milan and Aquileia are all related to the four most prominent Christian authors of the period: Jerome (Illyricum), Ambrose (Milan), Rufinus (Aquileia) and Augustine (Africa, Rome, Milan). Here again I am not convinced. What would be the point of this fabrication? Was it as evident to the author and his contemporary readers as it is to us that these four Christian authors were the leading luminaries of the day? In any case I would not dare to use this constellation as an argument in the discussion of the date of the *HA*, as Paschoud does at p. 340.

To the metaphors for the *HA* previously quoted another one may be added: the *HA* is a maelstrom, threatening to swallow its students. Encouraged by P.’s daring ‘rapprochements’, I offer one of my own. It is intended as a cautionary example. In *Car.* 11.2 we read that Numerianus was a gifted poet: *et cum Olympio Nemesiano, qui ἀλιευτικά, κυνηγητικά et ναυτικά scripsit quique omnibus coloribus (coronis P.)⁴ inlustratus*

⁴ The manuscript P reads *coloniis*. Casaubonus (and Madvig) proposed *coronis*,

emicuit, et Aurelium Apollinarem iamborum scriptorem, qui patris eius gesta in litteras rettulit, isdem, quae recitaverat, editis veluti radio solis obtexit. Nemesianus is unobjectionable. He was a poet and a contemporary of Carus. Apollinaris naturally evokes the fifth century poet Gaius Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius, author of poetical imperial panegyrics like Aurelius Apollinaris. Domaszewski (1918, 19) was of the opinion that the author was indeed thinking of him. Chastagnol (1980) discussed the passage quoted above in his article *Numérien l'intellectuel* and said about Domaszewski's suggestion: 'Le rapprochement ne manque certes pas d'intérêt' (p. 67). Sidonius, however, lived long after the time of writing of the *HA* accepted by most scholars, i.e. around 400. For that reason Chastagnol gladly accepted the suggestion made by Stein (PIR², I, p. 295, n° 1453), that the names Nemesianus and Apollinaris were taken from Cc. 6.7, where they figured as *tribuni* of the pretorian guard, who conspired to murder their emperor: *conscii caedis fuerant Nemesianus et frater eius Apollinaris*. Does this mean that we can forget about the poet Nemesianus? Of course not. Neither should Apollinaris be ignored. As I observed in my review (1998, 416) of vol. 5,1 (p. 201 of this volume), the arguments for a *terminus ante quem* of the *HA* are as inconclusive as the arguments for the *terminus post quem* are solid. So let us take a closer look at the name of this poet Aurelius Apollinaris. Note that the *gentilicium* Aurelius was lacking in Cc. 6.7. The author probably found it in Dio Cassius 79.5.2-3: Νεμεσιανόν τε καὶ Ἀπολλινάριον ἀδελφοὺς Αὐρηλίους and introduced it in *Car.* 11, thereby creating one of those hybrids he fancies like Suetonius Optatianus or Fabius Marcellinus. Now the etymology of the *gentilicium* Aurelius was well known: *Aureliam familiam ex Sabinis oriundam a Sole dictam putant* (Paul. Fest. p. 23). This is interesting indeed, for it irresistibly evokes the element *Sollius* in the name of the fifth century poet. For inveterate skeptics it may be added that the poet's friend Lampridius (*sic*, the name had not escaped Domaszewski) used to call him jokingly *Phoebus* (*Ep.* 8.11.3: *hic me quondam, ut inter amicos ioca, Phoebum vocabat*). Incidentally, this gives some sense to the phrase *veluti radio solis obtexit*, which P., following Casaubonus, calls absurd (p. 368):⁶ the author in this way draws attention to the 'solar' connotations of the poet's name. To clinch the matter there is the fictitious story of the statue awarded to

Petschenig *coloribus*, which is paleographically as plausible as *coronis*. As a friend pointed out to me, *colores* is often used in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages for poetic *ornatus*, as in *Sidonii trabeatus sermo refulgens / sidere multiplici splendet gemmisque colorum / lucet* (Alain de Lisle).

Numerian by the senate: *ut illi statua, non quasi Caesari, sed quasi rhetori decerneretur, ponenda in bibliotheca Ulpia* (Car. 11.3). Are we or are we not entitled to think of the statue, mentioned by P. on p. 368, that was really erected in honour of Sidonius Apollinaris on Trajan's Forum (*cum meis poni statuam perennem / Nerva Traianus titulis videret / inter auctores utriusque fixam / bybliothecae*, Ep. 9.16.3. 25-8)? *Viderint alii*, but I have rarely seen such a cluster of references.⁷

I hope that the remaining volumes in the Budé-series will be of the same high level as the ones discussed in this review. One thing can already be said with safety: *finis coronat opus*.

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⁶ The idea must be that Numerianus' sun outshone the lesser light of Apollinaris, cf. Sen. Nat. 7.20.44 *multos cometas non videmus quia obscurantur radiis solis: quo deficiente quondam cometen apparuisse quem sol vicinus obtexerat Posidonius tradit*.

⁷ Of course there remain loose ends. Why is Aurelius Apollinaris called *iamborum scriptor*? Iambic verse is unsuitable for a panegyric. Sidonius Apollinaris occasionally wrote iambic poetry (Ep. 15.3 ad Gelasium), but says about himself that this was an exception (Ep. 9.16.3.39-40 *citato / rarus iambo*). Neither do I see the point of *isdem, quae recitaverat, editis*. Does this mean that Numerianus was improvising and that nothing needed to be changed?

III

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE ROMANIZATION OF JULIAN

About which emperor do we know the most? Ten years ago I would have replied: Augustus where the *res gestae* are concerned, and Marcus Aurelius when it comes to personal opinions. I now think that that would have been the wrong answer; it should have been: Julian. This is very surprising in view of the fact that Julian was emperor for only twenty months (Nov. 361 – June 363), and that he died round about his thirtieth year (indeed, like Alexander and Jesus, who for different reasons meant a lot to him). As soon as we give the emperor the full name under which he is known, Julian the Apostate, we begin to understand why Julian has received so much attention from historians. He was viewed by some as a hero, by others as a devil,¹ because of his return to paganism and his carefully considered attempt not only to put a stop to the expansion of Christendom but also to make sure that the pagan tradition as he saw it would triumph. In this article I intend to discuss the image of Julian by comparing the picture painted by Ammianus Marcellinus with that in other sources and with Julian's own writings. A few words about each of the three parties. Ammianus, who was probably a native of the Greek speaking Eastern half of the empire,² had served as a staff-officer under Julian in Gaul and during his Persian expedition. He wrote his *Res gestae* some twenty-five years after Julian's death in Latin for a Roman public. The books 14-31 have survived. Julian is the central character in the books 15-25, first as Caesar under Constantius, then on his own as Augustus.

We can put his description next to that of Libanius, the orator from Antioch, who knew Julian, and perhaps also maintained a correspondence with Ammianus,³ and who painted an idealized picture of Julian in three panegyric speeches. His counterpart is St Gregory, bishop of Nazianzus, who had been Julian's fellow-student in Athens and who

¹ These last words must be taken literally. St Gregory of Nazianzus calls Julian τοῦ πονηροῦ τὸ πλήρωμα, the devil incarnate (*Or.* 2.87).

² All handbooks say that his cultural background is Greek. For that very reason he was, in the eyes of Von Wilamowitz, a representative of Greek historiography. Fornara (1992b) challenged this *communis opinio*.

³ Only if the Μαρκέλλινος of *Ep.* 983 X p. 186 Foerster can be identified with Ammianus Marcellinus, which is disputed with forceful arguments by Fornara.

vilified the emperor after his death in two speeches.⁴ When we compare the testimonies of these two, it becomes very clear that *laudatio* and *vituperatio* are two branches of one and the same tree. The *Nea Historia* of Zosimus (early 6th century) is also most valuable; he followed in the footsteps of Julian's almost-contemporary Eunapius of Sardes, the historian. Fifth-century Christian historians like Socrates and Sozomenus had already written about Julian before Zosimus, in a hostile manner, as was to be expected. Enough speeches, letters and satirical writings of Julian himself have survived, to give us a good impression of his philosophical and religious views (though Julian would not have acknowledged this distinction) and of his complex personality.

As regards Julian's attitude towards Rome, it is significant that he never set foot in this city, a fact which is truly astonishing for people who are only familiar with the early empire. His predecessor Constantius had favoured the Eternal City with one visit, in 357, beautifully described by Ammianus (16.10), but Julian's knowledge of the West was limited to the imperial residence Milan and Gaul, in particular Paris, Vienne and the Northern border territories.

Julian's upbringing was entirely Greek. As a boy he studied Homer enthusiastically, not just dutifully, and whilst in the gilded cage of his youth he spent almost all of his time reading. He read literary and philosophical texts, Christian as well as pagan, for although he had been instructed thoroughly in the Bible and Christian theology, some enlightened teachers had allowed him to read pagan authors as well. It is, perhaps, ironic that he is the first emperor who was baptized as a child and who had come into the world in Rome's Christian counterpart Constantinople. Julian takes pride in his Greek upbringing. He calls himself a Hellene, and talks gushingly about τὸ Ἑλληνικόν. It is a loaded concept, which not only expresses admiration for the tradition, but also rejects everything that is alien to it, first and foremost the Christian religion.

How did this Hellene view Rome, and what did he know about her history? Concerning the latter, not much, although he did know Latin. In Ammianus he addresses the soldiers in four speeches, and although these are, of course, not a literal reproduction of his words, we may deduce from them, that he was able to address his troops in that language. However, exempla from Roman history, put into these speeches by Ammianus, have no parallel in the emperor's authentic orations. There are

⁴ Or. 4 and 5, easily accessible in the series *Sources Chrétiennes*, no. 309, published by Bernardi (1983).

a few echoes of Latin authors in his work, from Caesar and Suetonius, but an author such as Vergil does not exist for him. In the eyes of a fourth-century senator this labels him as an outsider, if not a barbarian. It seems that Julian's main source of knowledge regarding Roman history was Plutarch.

Inevitably, Julian sometimes has reason to talk about Rome in his speeches. He calls the city διδάσκαλος ἀρετῆς (*Or.* 1.6b) in his first oration, a panegyric on Constantius. However, this characterization of the city is put into the mouth of Constantius. In a later piece of writing, the Hymn to King Helios, Rome is simply Hellenized:

οὗτος (Apollo) ἡμέρωσε μὲν διὰ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἀποικιῶν τὰ
πλεῖστα τῆς οἰκουμένης, παρεσκεύασε δὲ ῥᾶον ὑπακοῦσαι
Ῥωμαίοις ἔχουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς οὐ γένος μόνον Ἑλληνικόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ
Θεσμούς τοὺς θεοὺς εὐπιστίαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος Ἑλληνικὴν
καταστησάμενοις τε καὶ φυλάξασι (*Or.* 4.152d-153a).⁵

Julian unquestionably meant this cultural annexation to be a tribute to the Romans. It is doubtful whether the Roman senators saw it the same way. Julian's religious speculations with regard to Rome were of a fanciful nature; we get an impression of this in the following fragment, in which he links king Helios with the she-wolf of the tradition, although she belongs traditionally to Ares/Mars. He does this in the following way, via the word λύκαβας:

τοῦ χάριν δὲ ὁ λύκος Ἄρει μᾶλλον, οὐχὶ δὲ Ἡλίῳ προσήκει;
καίτοι λυκάβαντά φασιν ἀπὸ τοῦ λύκου τὸν ἐνιαύσιον χρόνον·
ὀνομάζει δὲ αὐτὸν οὐχ' Ὅμηρος μόνον οὐδὲ οἱ γνώριμοι τῶν
Ἑλλήνων τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα, πρὸς δὲ καὶ ὁ θεός. διανύων γὰρ φησιν
Ὀρχηθμῷ λυκάβαντα δωδεκάμηνα κέλευθα.⁶

The aim of this exercise is clear: to incorporate Rome in the cultural and philosophical tradition, which Julian holds sacred. Weiss makes the

⁵ 'He civilized the largest part of the world by means of Greek colonization, and in that way he made it easier to obey the Romans, who are themselves of Greek origin, and have also established and maintained holy rites and a belief in the gods which is through and through Greek.'

⁶ 'Why does the wolf belong to Ares and not to Helios? Is the duration of a year not called λύκαβας after the word λύκος? Not only Homer and other famous poets of Greece give it that name, but also the god [Helios] himself, completing, as he says, "whilst dancing the journey of twelve months, the λύκαβας".'

following comment: the Christians have dragged the history of Rome through the mud, Julian destroys her by transforming her into a myth.

It becomes crystal clear how little respect Julian had for Roman history in his satire *Συμπόσιον ἢ Κρόνια*, better known under the title *Caesares*, written for the Saturnalia of 361. In this satire he lampoons his predecessors practically without exception, even Julius Caesar and Augustus. The only ones who come out of it well are Alexander the Great, whose presence in this company is rather a surprise, and the φιλόσοφος βασιλεύς Marcus Aurelius, who published his writings in Greek. On the list of Julian's preferences he ends up in first place, immediately followed by Alexander. During a vicious discussion between Caesar and Alexander, the latter utters the following remarks, a well-known topos in the discussion between Greeks and Romans: 'if Alexander had marched against the West, would the Romans have been able to stop him?' It is perfectly obvious which side asks this question and which answer it has in mind.

The fact that Julian became unloved as well as unknown in Rome is not caused by these opinions alone. By his behaviour he made a mockery of the traditional demand of *gravitas*. There is a devastating portrayal of the agitated intellectual in the description of his fellow student Gregory, the later bishop of Nazianzus:

Οὐδενὸς γὰρ ἐδόκει μοι σημεῖον εἶναι χρηστοῦ ἀυχὴν ἀπαγῆς,
ὥμοι παλλόμενοι καὶ ἀνασηκούμενοι, ὀφθαλμὸς σοβούμενος καὶ
περιφερόμενος καὶ μανικὸν βλέπων, πόδες ἀστατοῦντες καὶ
μετοκλάζοντες, μυκτὴρ ὕβριν πνέων καὶ περιφρόνησιν, προσώπου
σχηματισμοὶ καταγέλαστοι τὸ αὐτὸ φέροντες, γέλωτες ἀκρατεῖς
τε καὶ βρασματώδεις, νεύσεις καὶ ἀνανεύσεις σὺν οὐδένι λόγῳ,
λόγος ἰστάμενος καὶ κοπτόμενος πνεύματι· ἐρωτήσεις ἄτακτοι καὶ
ἀσύνετοι, ἀποκρίσεις οὐδὲν τούτων ἀμείνους, ἀλλήλαις
ἐπεμβαίνουσαι καὶ οὐκ εὐσταθεῖς, οὐδὲ τάξει προῖουσai
παιδεύσεως.⁷

This testimony cannot be dismissed outright because it happens to

⁷ 'There seemed to be no indication of anything good in that wobbling neck, those fitfully twitching shoulders, those exalted eyes, which wandered around restlessly with a mad expression, those feet which he couldn't control, so that he hopped from one foot onto the other, those nostrils, snorting over-confidence and contempt, those ridiculous grimaces pointing to the same thing, that uncontrollable laugh which shook him, that idiotic nodding, that stuttering and stammering speech, those confused and stupid questions, those answers which were no better, which tumbled over one another, were not well structured and came out of his mouth in an uncivilized way.'

come from a prejudiced source, for even an author like Ammianus, who was well disposed towards Julian, makes disapproving remarks about the exuberant behaviour of the emperor (22.7.3).⁸

Furthermore, it is more than likely that Julian's regime did not strike a sympathetic chord in Rome. The letter in which Julian defended his coup and in which he spoke in negative terms about Constantius, got an extremely dismissive reaction from the side of the Senate.⁹ Finally, Julian's memory has been negatively influenced by the failure of his Persian expedition, during which he himself died, and which was concluded with a dishonourable peace.

One might raise the obvious objection, that Julian's most significant policy, namely his anti-Christian measures, must have met with approval from the pagan senators. Was it not the case that in the eighties and nineties of the fourth century these senators were for the most part pagans, and was there not in Rome a tendency among aristocrats to worship the pagan tradition, comparable with Julian's Hellenism? Yes, certainly, but the contemporary sources make it impossible to paint a simple picture in black and white. Both Christians and heathens are divided amongst themselves. Christian heretics and orthodox have more to fear from each other than from their non-Christian contemporaries, who in turn are divided into different denominations. Symmachus' Roman traditionalism is, indeed, far removed from Julian's Hellenism.

In order to form a clear picture of Julian's religious views it is important to know that he greatly revered Iamblichus, whom he considered to be one of the greatest philosophers, next to Plato and Pythagoras. Julian probably knew him through his writings, and certainly via the philosopher Maximus, who was himself a pupil of Aedesius, who had studied under Iamblichus. What characterized Iamblichus is a certain occultism, the aspiration to reach a higher level of consciousness through magic rituals, and ultimately to come into direct contact with the divine. This magical practice, called theurgy,¹⁰ has two variants, one

⁸ *Et cum die quodam ei causas ibi spectanti venisse nuntiatus esset ex Asia philosophus Maximus, exsiluit indecore et, qui esset, oblitus effuso cursu a vestibulo longe progressus exosculatum susceptumque reverenter secum induxit per ostentationem intempestivam.* 'One day, whilst he was occupied with a court case, he was told that the philosopher Maximus had arrived from Asia Minor. He jumped up from his chair without observing the proprieties, ran out of the entrance hall as fast as he could, kissed him, welcomed him with all due attention, and took him inside with indecent affectation.'

⁹ *Auctori tuo reverentiam rogamus*, 'we demand respect for the person who has given you your position', as the senators called out in reaction to this letter (21.10.7).

¹⁰ The classic study about theurgy is E. R. Dodds 1951, App. II Theurgy. Important additions in G. Fowden 1986, 126-34.

whereby the deity takes possession of a medium who is in a trance, and the other whereby the deity, present in the form of a statue, is stimulated to act by offerings of grain, appropriate for that particular deity, by the burning of incense, and by uttering incantations, meant for that particular deity. We know that Julian, when he was twenty, was brought into contact with theurgical practices by Maximus, mentioned above, who served as his closest adviser when Julian was Augustus.¹¹ Whatever the case, we get to know Julian, both from his own writings and, to a lesser degree, from statements of others, as a person who was totally possessed by the gods, who saw their hand in everything that happened, who spent a part of every night studying and meditating, and who brought sacrifices on an unprecedented scale to propitiate the gods. Ammianus clearly struggles with this excessive and exalted side of Julian. It is striking that in the elogium, the concluding remarks about Julian (25.4.17), when weighing up his *virtutes* and his *vitia*, he uses the same disapproving term as the one he uses in the final verdict of Julian's very Christian counterpart Constantius (21.16.18). Both are guilty of *superstitio*, they commit the sin of excess, Constantius by personally entering into discussions about dogma, Julian because of the extravagance of his sacrifices.

In spite of his religious and philosophical preoccupations Julian took his duties as an emperor very seriously. The *Codex Theodosianus* bears witness to a lot of legislative activity during his short reign. Even more remarkable is the fact that Julian, to everybody's surprise, was an extremely successful general. During the years 355-360, when operating as Caesar in Gaul, he restored the North-Western border of the empire, which was vulnerable and defenceless against German attacks. The Wallonian scholar Bidez writes, not without pride, that thanks to Julian Wallonia lies on a language border and therefore has a special task with regard to the exchange of ideas. Julian's sense of duty and personal courage, about which friend and foe agree, were probably strengthened by the Mithras-cult. Julian was an initiate and had reached the highest grade in the hierarchy of this religion.¹² The followers of Mithras were bound to aspire to virtues like courage and justice, which are of particular importance for a ruler and army commander. We should keep in mind that the various religious and philosophical views of Julian did

¹¹ The influence exerted by Maximus and a few other philosophers did not stop at philosophical matters. Ammianus (23.5.10) states regretfully that under their influence Julian did not heed the omens which warned him not to continue the Persian expedition.

¹² Ammianus hardly pays attention to this aspect of Julian's religiosity.

not necessarily clash with each other. None of these initiations was exclusive, or in conflict with the views about the divine which prevailed in Julian's version of Neo-Platonism. The Roman senator Vettius Agorius Praetextatus provides a wonderful parallel for this kind of syncretism; we know from an inscription that he combined numerous priesthoods and had been initiated into several mysteries (see Bloch 1960). Such pluralism in religious practices was not merely accepted, but positively encouraged because, as the orator Symmachus, a friend of Praetextatus, said: *uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum*, *Rel.* 3.10.¹³

Thus Julian's personality and policies must have had alternative sides when viewed from a Roman-pagan perspective. I have the feeling that many a senator felt the sort of mixture of sympathy and scorn for Julian, that is expressed so well by Kaváfis in the six poems dedicated to Julian.

The way in which Ammianus deals with Julian has to be judged against this background. His personal admiration for Julian is beyond doubt. At the beginning of his description of Julian as Caesar he writes:

quidquid autem narrabitur, quod non falsitas arguta concinnat, sed fides integra rerum absolvit documentis evidentibus fulta, ad laudativam paene materiam pertinebit (16.1.3).¹⁴

It is interesting to examine how Ammianus tries to persuade his readers to form the same favourable opinion. In this context the word *paene* in the preceding quotation is telling. Ammianus realized that a crude glorification in the manner of Libanius might have the opposite effect on his Roman public. For that reason, he criticizes Julian's conduct methodically and in detail whenever he deems this necessary. We have already noticed this with regard to, perhaps, less important issues such as *superstitio* and the lack of *gravitas*. But Ammianus also expresses sharp criticisms regarding vital aspects of Julian's regime. For instance, in the *elogium* (25.4.20) he censures severely two of Julian's most important measures. He condemns as *inclemens* the 'Berufsverbot' for Christian orators and grammarians, which barred Christian teachers from interpreting pagan authors, and which, if it had been maintained for a long time and in a strict manner, could have halted any further integration of Christendom into classical culture. He has a similarly critical opinion

¹³ 'it is impossible to fathom such a profound mystery by following only one road'.

¹⁴ 'My narrative, which is not a tissue of clever falsehoods but an absolutely truthful account based on clear evidence, will almost belong to the realm of panegyric' (tr. Hamilton, adapted).

about Julian's reluctance to exempt members of the urban aristocracy, the *curiales*, from their financial obligations. In my opinion, Blockley hits the nail on the head when he says: 'If we set aside Julian's apostasy and his treatment of the Christians, we find in Ammianus' narrative more varied condemnation than in any one ecclesiastical writer' (p. 77). Yet it is typical of Ammianus that he introduces these criticisms with the words that Julian in this respect was *dissimilis sui*. The positive aspects easily prevail in the *elogium*, but the final verdict has gained in persuasiveness, because it has not become an undiluted panegyric.

Ammianus shows Julian's excellence also by indirect means, namely by smearing his opponents, a method found in other Roman historians as well. The extremely negative judgement about the emperor Constantius seems in many places not to be a goal in itself but to have the aim of portraying Julian favourably; this is somewhat similar to the way in which Tacitus idealizes Germanicus in order to make Tiberius look worse. And it is not only the description of Constantius which has been (as it were) subordinated to that of Julian; Ammianus peppers the history of Gallus, Julian's half-brother, who like Julian had served under Constantius as Caesar, with value judgements, which emphasize the contrast with Julian.

Next to this show of impartiality and this indirect glorification by vilifying contrasting characters, both aimed at winning the Roman public over to Ammianus' opinion of Julian, there occurs in some passages a process, which I would like to call the 'romanization' of Julian. I will give two examples of this process. The first comes from the description of Julian's stay in Vienne during the winter of 360-361. By now he openly acts as Augustus and is naturally apprehensive as to how the legitimate Augustus, Constantius, will react. Then he has a dream, described as follows by Ammianus:

horrore medio noctis imago quaedam splendidior hos ei versus heroos modo non vigilanti aperte edixit ...:

Ζεὺς ὅταν εἰς πλατὺ τέρμα μόλη κλυτοῦ ὕδροχόοιο
παρθενικῆς δὲ Κρόνος μοίρη βαῖνη ἐπὶ πέμπτη
εἰκοστῇ, βασιλεὺς Κωνστάντιος Ἀσίδος αἴης
τέρμα φίλου βιοτοῦ στυγερὸν καὶ ἐπώδυνον ἔξει.¹⁵

¹⁵ 'In the middle of the night he perceived a luminous shape which addressed him, when he was almost awake, with the following hexameters...: "When Jupiter will have arrived at

We find the same oracle with minimal variations also in Zosimus, except that his introductory words state emphatically: ὁ ἥλιος ἐδόκει δείκνυναι τοὺς ἀστέρας αὐτῷ,¹⁶ a plausible way of presenting the situation, for who is better qualified than Helios to talk about the position of the planets in the Zodiac? When we also consider how important the worship of the sun was for Julian (see Athanassiadi-Fowden 1981, 173-7), it surely becomes very likely that this was the original form, which the dream took. Ammianus' *imago quaedam splendidior* is a much watered-down version of this, with which he covers up an important aspect of Julian's religiosity to put in its place a traditional image.¹⁷

At the beginning of 360 Julian had been proclaimed emperor by his troops in Paris. Supporters and opponents of the emperor judged this event in completely different ways. Julian's opponents interpreted it not only as a coup, but also as an expression of gross ingratitude towards the man who had made him Caesar. In Ammianus' version, which as regards content agrees with Julian's own account in his Letter to the Athenians, there is absolutely no question of planning, and Julian is simply forced by his soldiers to accept the title of Augustus; Julian describes how he asks Zeus' advice, whilst shut inside his palace by the roaring troops:

προσεκύνησα τὸν Δία. Γενομένος δὲ ἔτι μείζονος τῆς βοῆς ...
ἤτεόμην τὸν θεὸν 'δοῦναι τέρας, αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἡμῖν δεῖξε καὶ ἠνώγει'
πεισθῆναι.¹⁸

In this way the coup is legitimized at the crucial moment through divine providence. In Ammianus there is no trace of this scene. He does, however, give a description of a dream, again, in which the Genius publicus manifests itself to Julian (20.5.10):

*iunctioribus proximis rettulerat imperator per quietem aliquem visum, ut
formari Genius publicus solet, haec obiurgando dixisse 'olim, Iuliane,
vestibulum aedium tuarum observo latenter, augere tuam gestiens digni-*

the vast border territory of the renowned Aquarius, and Saturn comes into the 25th degree of Virgo, Constantius, ruler of Asia, will reach the dreadful and grievous end of his life" (21.2.2). This is a (reasonably accurate) astronomical indication of Constantius' dying day, 3 November 361.

¹⁶ 'he dreamt that the Sun pointed out the stars to him'.

¹⁷ Cf. for instance Tac. *Hist.* 4.83.1 *simul visum eundem iuvenem in caelum igne plurimo attolli*, and Apul. *Met.* 11.3 *perlucidum simulacrum*.

¹⁸ 'I prayed to Zeus. When the shouts became even louder..., I asked the god "to give a signal, and he gave me a signal and urged me" (Hom. *Od.* 3.173-4) to obey.'

*tatem et aliquotiens tamquam repudiatus abscessi; si ne nunc quidem recipior, sententia concordante multorum, ibo demissus et maestus. id tamen retineto imo corde, quod tecum non diutius habitabo*¹⁹

The introduction of the Genius here is probably inspired by Suet. *Galba* 4.3 *somniavit Fortunam dicentem stare se ante fores defessam et, nisi ocius reciperetur, cuicumque obvio praedae futuram*.²⁰ This derivation is a master-stroke on the part of Ammianus. For a start, the genius is quintessentially Roman. For Ammianus' readers the Genius publicus is a familiar appearance, because his golden statue, erected by the emperor Aurelianus, could be seen in the Forum. At the same time the Genius publicus has a certain topical meaning. Whilst hardly present in older literary texts, he is quite regularly mentioned in the literature of the late fourth century, particularly by the pagan authors Ammianus, Servius, Symmachus and Macrobius, as a kind of embodiment of Rome's vitality and traditions. This is even more remarkable, because all manifestations of Genius-worship had been forbidden by the emperor Theodosius the Great (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12 of 392, exactly when Ammianus was working on his *Res gestae*). It seems plausible to me that the fact that these authors display their interest in the Genius shows their love for the Roman tradition; therefore we should see in this a veiled protest against this specifically Christian legislation. This might also explain why many years later Prudentius still engaged in such a vehement polemic against Symmachus' statement *ut animae nascentibus ita populis fatales genii dividuntur*,²¹ in a long passage (c. *Symm.* 2.370-453) which culminates in the statement (*Genius*) *qui nusquam est nec fuit umquam*.²² Back to Julian. In the *elogium* (25.4, see Den Boeft et al. 2005, 111-68), which follows the description of his death and which has been mentioned more

¹⁹ 'The emperor told his closest friends that in the dream he had seen someone who resembled the Genius publicus as he is usually portrayed [i.e. as a young man with a cornucopia in the right hand and a patera in the left]. He had said to him in a reproachful tone: "For a long time I have secretly been keeping an eye on the forecourt of your house, because I am eager to enhance your prestige, and more than once I have left because I was rejected. If this time, when so many agree with me, I will again not be admitted, I will leave, dejected and sad. But you will have to consider this deep in your heart, that from then on I will no longer live with you"'

²⁰ 'In a dream he saw Fortuna, who said to him that she was waiting in front of his door, tired, and that if she was not quickly admitted, she would fall prey to the first person to arrive.'

²¹ 'just as human beings receive a soul at birth, so *genii* who guide their fate are distributed among nations', *Rel.* 3.8.

²² 'the *genius*, which is nowhere and has never been'.

than once, Ammianus deals with Julian's merits according to the scheme of the four principal virtues *temperantia, prudentia, iustitia, fortitudo*. This is in accordance with the tradition and the rhetorical precepts. He continues with a series of good qualities, which has a stronger Roman flavour, and was probably inspired by Cicero's eulogy for Pompey in the *Pro lege Manilia*, namely *scientia militaris, felicitas* and *liberalitas*. Thus Julian combines the qualities typical of the wise legislator and of the general.

What Ammianus aimed at for his description of Julian is nowhere expressed more clearly than in the concluding chapters of book 25. When mentioning the city of Tarsus, where Julian was buried, Libanius (*Or.* 18.306) had made the following remark: εἶχε δ' ἂν δικαιότερον τὸ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας πλήσιον τοῦ Πλάτωνος ὥστ' αὐτῷ παρὰ τῶν ἀεὶ νέων καὶ διδασκάλων ἃ καὶ τῷ Πλάτωνι τελεῖσθαι.²³ Ammianus uses a variation on this, which contains an allusion to the famous lines from *Aeneid* 6 (873-4):

*vel quae, Tiberine videbis
funera, cum tumulum praeterlabere recentem?*

as follows (25.10.5): *cuius suprema et cineres ... non Cydnus videre deberet, ... sed ad perpetuandam gloriam recte factorum praeterlabere Tiberis intersecans urbem aeternam divorumque veterum monumenta praestringens*.²⁴

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²³ 'It would have been more just if he had been buried in the Academy, near Plato, so that he could have received the same honours as Plato from each new generation of pupils and teachers.'

²⁴ 'It should not have been the Cydnus beholding his mortal remains and his ashes ..., but to immortalize the glory of his deeds the Tiber should have flowed past, which cuts through the Eternal City and washes with its waves the monuments of the deified Great of the past.'

CHAPTER TWENTY

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS ON ASTRONOMY (*RES GESTAE* 20.3)

In ch. 20. 3 of his *Res gestae* Ammianus Marcellinus gives an exposition of astronomical matters. The first part (§1-8) deals with solar and lunar eclipses. It is interrupted by a short explanation (§6) of the phenomenon known as *sol geminus* (παρήλιον). In the second part (§9-11) Ammianus discusses the phases of the moon. The last section (§12) deals with faulty observations caused by the weakness of human eye-sight. Joachim Szidat (1977) has been the first to provide a thorough interpretation of this chapter, which is indispensable for the understanding of this difficult digression. There are points, however, on which the interpretation given by Szidat must be modified or, in a few cases, corrected. Some of the more important ones will be discussed in this article.¹

First the question of the sources used by Ammianus in this chapter. It is *a priori* probable that he studied popular Greek astronomical treatises such as those by Cleomedes, Theon Smyrnaeus and Geminus. Yet there is no evidence of direct imitation of any of these authors. All the astronomical information in this chapter could have been found in the Latin authors of the classical period who have written on the subject. The one Greek astronomer quoted by name, Ptolemaeus, has in all likelihood not been consulted directly. Ammianus' rather vague and repetitious account of the phenomena can hardly have been inspired by Ptolemy's highly technical exposition (*Alm.* bk. 6). Ammianus' treatment of this subject shows similarities to his digression on earthquakes (17.7.9-14), where Aristotle, Anaxagoras and Anaximander are mentioned *ornatus causa*, as De Jonge remarks in his note *ad loc.*, whereas Ammianus' real sources are Latin authors.

Among the classical Latin authors who have written on the subject of eclipses (Cic. *Rep.* 1.22-5; *Div.* 2.17; *N.D.* 2.49-56; Plin. *NH* 2.41-58; Sen. *Nat.* 1.12; *Ben.* 5.6.4) Cicero is by far Ammianus' most important source. Indeed, it is only by comparing Cicero's expositions of the subject that the correct interpretation of some problematical points in the digression of Ammianus can be reached. To this must be added that in

¹ See for a full discussion of this chapter Den Boeft *et al.* 1987.

his choice of technical terms Ammianus shows marked similarities with Calcidius, as Szidat has observed. His conclusion ‘man wird sich Ammians Quellen daher in dem Ueberlieferungsstrom zu denken haben, der zu Chalcidius führt’ must be accepted.

The digression proper begins with the words (§3) *quod* (i.e. a solar eclipse) *alias non evenit ita perspicue nisi cum post inaequales cursus iter menstruum lunae ad idem revocatur initium certis temporum intervallis, id est cum in domicilio eiusdem signi tota repperitur luna sub sole linamentis obiecta rectissimis* (...). It seems probable that Ammianus had in mind Cicero’s description of the planetarium (*sphaera*) built by Archimedes (*Rep.* 1.22): *in eo admirandum esse inventum Archimedi quod excogitasset quem ad modum in dissimillimis motibus inaequabiles et varios cursus* (of sun, moon and planets) *servaret una conversio* (of the *sphaera*) as well as Cicero’s definition of the completion of the *magnus annus*: *signis omnibus ad idem principium* (...) *revocatis* (*Rep.* 6.24). A further comparison with the passage in *Rep.* 1 may help to solve the problem caused by the words *iter menstruum*. This reading was proposed by Valesius instead of *inter menstruum* VE, *intermenstruum* BAG. It has been accepted by all later editors. There are, however, strong reasons to retain the ms. reading. Ammianus tries to explain in §2 that a solar eclipse does not occur at every new moon, but only when sun, moon and earth are in the same plane, so that they can be on a straight line. He repeats this in other words in §3 and again in §4, where he uses more technical language: *tum sol occultatur* (...) *cum ipse et lunaris globus* (...) *iunctim locati* (in conjunction) *ad dimensiones venerint quos ἀναβιβάζοντας καὶ καταβιβάζοντας ἐκλειπτικούς συνδέσμους* (...) *Graeco dictitamus sermone*. An eclipse occurs only, that is, when, during the *interlunium*, the moon is in one of the two nodes, i.e. the intersections of the orbit-planes of the sun and the moon. Now *intermenstruum* means ‘the period between two lunar months, the time of the new moon’ (*OLD*), as in Var. *R.* 1.37.1 and Cic. *Rep.* 1.25, that is to say the time during which the sun and the moon are in conjunction. *Cum* (...) *intermenstruum lunae ad idem revocatur initium* means ‘when the conjunction of the moon and the sun occurs in the same place again’ (i.e. as where the last eclipse took place).² This coincidence of the monthly conjunction with the moon’s passing through one of the two nodes occurs at regular intervals (*certis temporum intervallis*), which makes these

² The addition of *lunae*, which is, strictly speaking, superfluous, makes it clear that the author is thinking not of the time of the *intermenstruum*, but of the position of the moon at that moment.

eclipses predictable. *Iter menstruum ad idem revocatur initium* could only refer to the synodic month. As we saw, Ammianus takes great pains to distinguish between the monthly conjunction and the particular conjunction during which a solar eclipse occurs. Moreover, *certis temporum intervallis* would be pointless if referring to the monthly conjunction. On internal grounds, therefore, the ms. reading *intermenstruum* is superior to Valesius' conjecture. A further argument to retain *intermenstruum* is that in the sequel of Cicero's discussion of Archimedes' planetarium, from which Ammianus borrowed the phrase *post inaequales cursus*, the conditions under which a solar eclipse occurs are described as follows (*Rep.* 1.25) *certo illud (the eclipse) tempore fieri et necessario, cum tota se luna sub orbem solis subiecisset; itaque etsi non omni intermenstruo, tamen id fieri non posse nisi intermenstrui tempore*. It seems very likely that Ammianus used the word *intermenstruum* in imitation of this passage.

One serious difficulty remains. Valesius was led to make his conjecture, however hesitantly ('*paene adducor ut credam*'), by the fact that in §11, discussing the lunar eclipse, Ammianus says: *non nisi tempore intermenstrui deficere visam usquam lunam*. With *intermenstruum* in its proper meaning this is nonsense, as a lunar eclipse occurs at the full moon. For that reason Valesius supposed that Ammianus understood *intermenstrui tempus* to mean the period of the full moon and he changed the text in §2 accordingly. It seems, however, methodically untenable not to accept a reading found in all manuscripts, which makes excellent sense in the context of the passage and is in accordance with the model followed by the author, while at the same time attributing a meaning to the word *intermenstruum* which is unattested. We must, therefore, return to the ms. reading and accept the conclusion that in §11 Ammianus makes an embarrassing mistake. As we shall see, it is not his only one in this chapter.

The discussion of the solar eclipse is followed by a section on *sol geminus* (παρίλιον). Strictly speaking, the subject is out of place, as this is a meteorological, not an astronomical phenomenon. It is, however, probable that in popular astronomical treatises this subject was regularly discussed in connection with the eclipses. In Plin. *NH* 2, sections 1-101 are devoted to the stars, 102-53 to meteorology. The discussion on haloforming and parhelia forms the end of the section on astronomy (99-100). In Seneca *Nat.* 1.11 and 1.13 the parhelion is discussed, while 1.12 explains the solar eclipse. Cleomedes treats in 2.6, immediately after the section on eclipses, the phenomenon that the sun sometimes re-

mains visible after it has set, which he explains in terms that are very similar to those used by Ammianus in this section. But most important of all, the description of Archimedes' planetarium in Cic. *Rep.* 1.21-25, which served to explain several expressions in Ammianus' digression, was provoked by Scipio's question concerning the phenomenon of *sol geminus*: 1.19 *quaesierat ex me Scipio quidnam sentirem de hoc quod duo soles visos esse constaret*. It seems not unlikely that this phenomenon was explained in the lacuna following the opening words of §26, after the section on the planetarium, in which the eclipses played such a prominent part, as E. Bréguet suggested on internal grounds in her Budé-edition of *Rep.* I, 160/1: 'Il faut remarquer que l'explication du double soleil ne pouvait se faire au moyen de la sphère d'Archimède. Etait-elle donnée dans la lacune?' The digression of Ammianus suggests a positive answer to this question.

In Ammianus' discussion of the lunar eclipse (§8) we read *quoniam circa terrenam mobilitatem locata* (sc. luna) *et a caelo totius pulchritudinis extima nonnumquam ferienti se subserit lanci*, (...) *latet parumper umbrata*. The words *circa terrenam mobilitatem* are difficult. Szidat rightly rejects all interpretations which would imply that the earth itself is in motion. His tentative solution, viz. that the words could refer to the moon's orbit around the earth is linguistically impossible and is not supported by the parallel he quotes from Cassiodorus (*in psalm.* 148, 276 *fabricam quoque caeli quae semper rotabili mobilitate se sustinet*). The celestial sphere does revolve around the earth according to the accepted astronomical theory, whereas according to that same theory the earth is at rest at the centre of the universe. Prof. Leeman has suggested to me that Cicero's *Somnium* has influenced Ammianus' terminology in this part of the digression too. There are indeed numerous verbal echoes. In *Rep.* 6.16 Cicero describes the moon in the following words: *quae ultima a caelo, citima terris luce lucebat aliena*, in §17 we find *in infimoque orbe luna radiis solis accensa convertitur* and in §18 (*cursus*) *hic lunaris atque infimus*, with which compare Ammianus §4 *lunaris globus astrorum omnium infimus* and §8 *quam numquam habere proprium lumen opinioniones variae conlegerunt*. Cicero (*Rep.* 6.17) describes the universe as consisting of nine concentric spheres, of which the terrestrial globe is the innermost one. The description ends with the words *nam ea quae est media et nona, tellus, neque movetur et infima est*, repeated in §18 with the words *terra nona immobilis manens una sede semper haeret*. On account of these parallels Leeman proposes to read in Ammianus' text *circa terrenam immobilitatem*, which is paleographically attractive

and in accordance with the accepted opinion about the position of the earth in the universe.

In *nonnumquam ferienti se subserit lanci* the word *lanx* can only refer to the solar disk (cf. §1 *penitus lance abrepta* about a solar eclipse). This is awkward, because it would mean that a lunar eclipse can occur when the moon comes between the sun and the earth. As Ammianus has just explained that the moon is eclipsed only when it is full, he is here flatly contradicting himself. ‘Eine sehr ungeschickte Ausdrucksweise’ (Szidat) is the least one can say about it. Either Ammianus is confusing lunar and solar eclipses, or he does not distinguish between the invisibility of the moon during the *intermenstruum* and that during an eclipse.

In the next section (§9-11) Ammianus discusses the phases of the moon. His exposition is in accordance with the traditional distinction of seven phases (not counting the new moon), which is clearly formulated in Firm. *Math.* 4.1.10: *est itaque luna aut synodica, aut plena aut dichotomos aut menoeides, aut amficyrtos. et per has mutata formas cursum menstrui luminis complet.* First Firmicus distinguishes full moon and new moon, then first and last quarter (*dichotomos*). Next he mentions the intermediate phases, *menoeides* and *amficyrtos* which come between quarter and new moon and between quarter and full moon respectively. So there are seven phases in all, as confirmed by Macrobius (*comm.* 1.6.55): *septem (...) permutationibus, quas φάσεις vocant, toto mense distinguitur* (sc. *luna*): *cum nascitur, cum fit διχότομος et cum fit ἀμφίκυρτος, cum plena et rursus ἀμφίκυρτος, ac denovo διχότομος et cum ad nos luminis universitate privatur.* Ammianus enumerates the phases between new moon and full moon and, for the sake of brevity, says that the moon goes through the same phases again between full moon and new moon. He uses the Greek terms for the moon-phases, as do the other late-Latin authors who discuss the subject (Firmicus Maternus, Macrobius and Martianus Capella). His terminology is traditional except in his use of *dichomenis* instead of *dichotomos* for quarter moon. Szidat (p. 125) is of the opinion that Ammianus distinguishes yet another moon-phase, *gracilescens*, in §10: *exortus vero eius adhuc gracilescens primitus mortalitati videtur, cum ad secundum relicto sole migraverit signum.* He calls this a ‘bedeutsame und wichtige Erweiterung’ compared with Cleomedes, Firmicus and Pliny. This is certainly overstating the case. Ammianus does not speak about a phase *gracilescens* on a par with *menoeides*, *dichomenis* etc. What is said in §10 is only that the crescent of the moon, when it reappears after new moon, is still very slender. The usual phases stand out by their Greek technical names

(*menoides est appellata, fit Graeco sermone dichomenis, formam monstrat amphicyrti*). Vitruvius (9.2.3), quoted as a parallel by Szidat, is not to be compared with Ammianus, as he avoids the traditional terms altogether and speaks in a more technical fashion about the moon in the days after new moon as *luna prima*, *-secunda* and so on. In Macr. *comm.* 1.6.55 quoted above, which Szidat mentions as a possible parallel, it is more natural to take the words *cum nascitur* and *cum (. . .) privatur* as a periphrasis of *menoeides* than as the equivalent of a phase *gracilescens*. Macrobius mentions just one phase between new moon and quarter. It is unlikely that he should leave out the phase *menoeides* which comes half-way, in order to include a phase between *menoeides* and new moon. Finally, Szidat's qualification of this passage as 'sachlich (...) fehlerfrei' can only be accepted if *intermenstruum* at the end of §11 is taken to mean 'half-way between two new moons, i.e. at full moon'. As was said before, this is an unattested meaning of the word which leads, moreover, to serious complications in the interpretation of §2 of this digression.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE SCIENTIFIC DIGRESSIONS IN AMMIANUS' *RES GESTÆ*

In his treatise *de cometis* in book 7 of his *Naturales Quaestiones* Seneca takes the historian Ephorus to task for providing unreliable information about comets. It will not be difficult, Seneca says, to refute Ephorus' testimony, for, as he puts it tersely: *historicus est* (7.16.1). Seneca does distinguish between historians who deliberately tell *incredibilia* in order to keep their readers' attention and those who are the victims of their own credulity or lack of proper care, but, he says, all of them (*tota natio*) are of the opinion that historical work needs a dash of the miraculous, of θαυμάσια or *mirabilia* – to use a less offensive term than Seneca's *mendacium* – to be really popular with their audiences.¹ What would have been Seneca's opinion on Ammianus' performance in his digressions on natural phenomena? Would he have condemned him with the rest of the *natio historicorum*? And if so, would he have classed him with the wilful liars or with the merely naive? And would Seneca have been justified in saying that the need to provide variety was Ammianus' overriding motive in introducing scientific digressions into his work?

Apart from these questions prompted by Seneca's verdict on Ephorus, we are confronted with modern judgments on these digressions that have been very influential. In one of the few studies devoted to the subject Von Scala (1898, 120) writes: '(Ammianus) streut in wahrhaft kindlicher Weise die Schätze seines Zettelkastens (...) über sein Werk aus'. And Norden (1958², 647) complains: 'durch seine Exkurse, die er nach althergebrachter Manier einlegt, bringt er den modernen Leser zur Verzweiflung, denn er zieht sie an den Haaren heran'.² These evalua-

¹ Sen. Nat. 7.16.1-2 *contra argumenta dictum est, contra testes dicendum est. nec magna molitione detrahenda est auctoritas Ephoro: historicus est. quidam incredibilium relatu commendationem parant et lectorem, aliud acturum si per cotidiana ducetur, miraculo excitant; quidam creduli, quidam negligentes sunt; quibusdam mendacium obrepit, quibusdam placet, illi non evitant, hi appetunt. haec in commune de tota natione, quae approbari opus suum et fieri populare non putat posse, nisi illud mendacio aspersit. Ephorus vero non est religiosissimae fidei; saepe decipitur, saepe decipit.*

² Modern studies are less dismissive. Sabbah (1978, 525-8) discusses what he calls *la fonction 'éthique' des digressions*, meaning that Ammianus at times uses his digressions to present

tions make themselves felt even today. In the recent English translation of the *Res gestae* in the Penguin Classics³ the digressions on geography and natural phenomena have been omitted. The authors of the Preface are of the opinion that 'some of these would be frankly tedious for the modern reader'. The contemporary and the classical appreciation of these insertions into the narrative are thus diametrically opposed: Seneca reproached the historian for introducing them in order to avoid tedium, now they have been left out as being 'frankly tedious'. Before trying to answer the questions raised above some preliminary remarks must be made. It is highly probable that Ammianus himself attached great value to his digressions or *excessus*, as he calls them. This is suggested both by the exceptional care with which they have been written, to which I will return, and by their extent in proportion to the whole of the *Res gestae*. The digressions explicitly marked as such by formulaic introductions and conclusions take up just over 11% of the text.⁴ This is an exceptionally high proportion. The only historian whose work has been preserved that can be compared to him in this respect is Herodotus.⁵

The digressions in Ammianus have been classified according to their subject matter by Schanz-Hosius and Cichocka. The category labelled 'naturwissenschaftlich' consists of the digressions on earthquakes (17.7) – to which I should like to add the passage on the cognate subject of the tidal wave (26.10) –, the plague (19.4), eclipses (20.3), the rainbow (20.11), meteors (25.2), comets (25.10) and the bissextile or intercalary day (26.1). The question may be asked whether the distinctions made by Schanz-Hosius and Cichocka are not in part anachronistic. In Ammianus' view subjects like *divinatio* and the role of the *genius*, to which he devotes two extremely important digressions at the beginning and near the end of book 21, may well have been just as scientific as are the natural phenomena mentioned above. He assures us (21.1.8) that *divinatio*

himself as a detached historian, especially before or after passages in which he is strongly involved personally. Matthews (1989, 482) states that his book 'has relatively little to say on Ammianus' digressions in their own right', but makes some illuminating remarks all the same on p. 463.

³ Hamilton and Wallace-Hadrill, 1986.

⁴ Cichocka (1975, 338) has the following computation: in books 14–23, 13% of the text consists of digressions, in 24–31 it is 4%. The percentage of the work as a whole is therefore 17%! This figure is repeated in Rosen (1982, 79). The correct calculation on the basis of her data is given in the text.

⁵ Theopompus went even further than Herodotus. When Philip V stripped everything not directly related to the history of his ancestor Philip II from the 58 books of the *Philippica*, a mere 15 books remained (115 *FGrHist* T 31).

has its foundation in the laws of nature, and *genii* or δαίμονες are just as much part of nature to him and indeed to his contemporaries as are for us the wind, or, to quote Peter Brown's parallel, bacteria. A justification for setting apart the digressions on natural phenomena from those on *divinatio* and the *genius* seems to be provided by the fact that in the former Ammianus refers to *physici*, doctors and astronomers as his authorities (17.7.9: *physicorum iurgia*; 19.4.2: *philosophi et illustres medici*; 20.3.3: *scrutatores causarum intelligibilium*; 20.11.26: *rationes physicae*; 25.10.2: *physici*; 26.1.8: *periti mundani motus et siderum*), whereas in the latter we find references to *theologi veteres* (21.1.8 and 21.14.3). The distinction, however, is less clear than it seems at first sight. In the excursus on *divinatio* we find *physici* (21.1.11: *sol enim, ut aiunt physici, mens mundi nostras mentes ... futuri conscias reddit*, see the comm. of Den Boeft *et al.* ad loc.) and in the digression on earthquakes there is mention of *theologi* (17.7.12: *ideoque Neptunum umentis substantiae potestatem Ennosigaeon et Sisichthona poetae veteres et theologi nuncupant*). I think therefore that Ensslin (1923, 66) was right when he remarked in passing that in Ammianus' view *physici* and *theologi* occupied themselves with the same problems. That Ammianus treated problems we call scientific on a par with a subject like *divinatio* (21.1.7: *doctrinae genus haud leve*) is also suggested by the passage on the scholarly activities of the Alexandrians in 22.16.17-18, where we find geometry, music, astronomy, arithmetic, *divinatio* and medicine named in one breath, while a few lines further the experiments of Anaxagoras with regard to meteors and earthquakes are mentioned.⁶ The classification of Schanz-Hosius and Cichocka may, therefore, indeed be called anachronistic. In accepting it nevertheless as the point of departure for this study, I am led by my surprise as a modern reader at finding these subjects treated at such length in a historical work.

The attention that has been given to the different types of digression is uneven. Several studies have been devoted to the geographical digressions, by far the largest group, and to the chapters on Rome and the Romans (14.6 and 28.4).⁷ The scientific excursus have not been studied as a set of related texts, except in the article by Von Scala, who has col-

⁶ *nam et disciplinarum magistri quodammodo spirant et nudatur ibi geometrico radio, quidquid reconditum latet, nondumque apud eos penitus exaruit musica nec harmonia contigit et recalet apud quosdam adhuc licet raros consideratio mundani motus et siderum doctique sunt alii numeros; pauci super his scientiam callent, quae fatorum vias ostendit. medicinae autem ... ita studia augentur in dies, ut e.q.s.*

⁷ See the bibliography in Rosen 1982, 192-3 (geographica) and 211-2 (Rome).

lected a number of possible sources for the information provided by Ammianus.

Turning now to the structure of these digressions we notice that they follow a pattern, which may be illustrated by the shortest specimen, the one on comets, 25.10.1-3:

- *per continuos dies velut offenso numine multa visebantur et dira ...*
(two examples are given)
- *et visa sunt interdiu sidera cometarum, super quorum natura ratiocinantes physici variant* (four theories are mentioned: introduced by: *quidam enim ... existimant ... alii arbitrantur ... , quidam ... sedit quorundam opinioni ...*)
- *plura alia de cometis apud peritos mundanae rationis sunt lecta, quae digerere nunc vetat aliorum oratio properans.*

First the phenomenon is described as it has presented itself in a given historical situation. Often the author promises in a more or less formulaic introduction to give an explanation of the phenomenon and goes on to do so. In nearly all cases this takes the form of an enumeration of the various theories on the subject, the δοξαί.⁸ In cases where this is appropriate, Ammianus sums up the different types or manifestations of the phenomenon. Finally the digression is rounded off with a formula of transition to the narrative.⁹

A common feature of the descriptions of the actual events leading up to type of digression is easily discovered in the following quotations:

- 17.7.2 (earthquake) *primo lucis exortu ... concreti nubium globi nigrantium laetam paulo ante caeli speciem confuderunt ... ita oculorum optutu praestricto humo involutus crassae caliginis squalor insedit.*
- 20.3.1. (eclipse) *caelum subtextum caligine cernebatur obscura ... hisque terroribus accedebat, quod ... defecisse diutius solem pavidae mentes hominum aestimabant.*
- 20.11.25 (rainbow) *undantes nubes cum tenebris advenere minacibus ... et super his iugi fragore tonitrua fulgoraque mentes hominum pavidas perterrebant.*
- 25.10.1-2 (comets) *velut offenso numine multa visebantur et dira ... cum horrendo stridore sonuerunt in consistorio trabes.*

⁸ Only the explanations of the solar and lunar eclipses and of the intercalary day are given, quite rightly, as undisputed facts.

⁹ For these formulaic openings and conclusions see Emmett 1981.

In all these passages Ammianus aims at evoking a sombre and menacing atmosphere. Sometimes he does this explicitly, mentioning the fear of the people witnessing the event, as in 20.3 and 20.11, but more often implicitly through the use of highly emotive words. The description of the beginning of the earthquake is the best example, with its emphasis on the sudden change in the weather, the enormity of the impact (17.7.3: *auditus est montium gemitus et elisi litoris fragor ... cum horrifico tremore terrarum*) and the presence of Ammianus' favourite word to create an uncanny atmosphere, *squalor* and its derivatives.¹⁰ Even in the section leading up to the description of the rainbow, which was not considered sinister in itself, the element of fear is present. This small observation is sufficient to cast doubt on the portrayal by Von Scala and Norden of our author as someone who, in and out of season, is showing off his second hand knowledge. The phenomena are not described for their own sake, but, as the menacing atmosphere shows, for the impact they have on the people witnessing them. That there is more here than a pedantic show of learning is also evident from the suggestion of divine displeasure hinted at in 17.7.3 (*velut numine summo fatales contorquente manubias*) and 25.10.2 (*velut offenso numine*).

In some cases there is an inconsistency between the introduction to the digression and the explanation. Ammianus mentions the theory of Anaxagoras that earthquakes are caused by the violence of the winds that have penetrated the innermost recesses of the earth. In a kind of claustrophobic frenzy they shake those parts of the earth under which they have crept. As a consequence, he says, 17.7.11: *plerumque observatur terra tremente ventorum apud nos spiramina nulla sentiri, quod in ultimis eius recessibus occupantur*. This is in sharp contrast with the introduction in 17.7.3, where typhoons and whirlwinds are mentioned which, together with a terrifying earthquake (*cum horrifico tremore terrarum*), ruined the city of Nicomedia. A similar inconsistency, or at least imprecision, can be observed in the introduction to the digression on eclipses. It is stated there (20.3.1): *caelum subtextum caligine cernebatur obscura*. That does not tally with the words *intermicabant iugiter stellae* that follow immediately and can only be understood as describing the effect of a total eclipse against a cloudless sky. There is, however, not only a contradiction within the description of the phenomenon itself, it is not in

¹⁰ See the commentary of Den Boeft *et al.* 1991, ad 21.14.2.

¹¹ See for these data Ginzel (1899, 212-3) quoted in Szidat (1977, 115).

accordance with the astronomical data concerning the eclipse in question either.¹¹ As is evident from the remark about the stars shining by day, the eclipse is described as total, whereas it must have been perceived as partial. And even in a total eclipse it is impossible that the stars should have been visible for six hours, as Ammianus would have us believe. This belongs to the 'Verformungstendenzen' that Demandt has signalled in many descriptions of eclipses in historical works.¹² On the basis of these observations one begins to suspect that Ammianus did not write his digressions in order to explain historical events of which he had a clear recollection, but that it is the other way round. The intention to insert a digression comes first and Ammianus, for reasons that will be discussed later on, creates an opportunity in his narrative to present the digression to his public. In the case of the solar eclipse, Ammianus may be said to have manipulated his description, in the case of the earthquake that he has failed to harmonize description and explanation.

After the description of the phenomenon and its relation to the explanation we turn to the explanations themselves. Their value depends entirely on the sources used by Ammianus. He never poses as an authority in his own right, speaking modestly about *haec nostra vulgaris inscitia* and deferring to the *physicorum iurgia*, the disputes of the natural philosophers, the *geometrica ratio*, the theories of the astronomers and the *philosophi et illustres medici*. This is honest and straightforward. But Ammianus is not to be taken at his word when he mentions specific authorities. Like many scholars in Antiquity (and not a few in modern times), he quotes the ultimate source, which as a rule he has not studied himself, instead of the doxographical textbook he has consulted. This is evidently the case in 21.14.5, where Ammianus quotes a treatise by Plotinus on the ἰδιος δαίμων in such a way that his paraphrase reveals his ignorance. Given the vagueness of most of his digressions, it is highly unlikely that he gained his information from technical works by specialists like e.g. the astronomer Ptolemy, quoted in the digression on eclipses (20.3.4), or the mathematicians Meton, Euctemon, Hipparchus and Archimedes, quoted in the chapter on the intercalary day (26.1.8).

It is much more difficult to discover which sources Ammianus did consult, as it is always hazardous to try to establish a literary dependence between two texts, especially when the subject matter more or less dictates the vocabulary to be used. In such cases there should at

¹² Demandt (1970, 476) quotes this passage as a typical example of the tendency to describe partial or annular eclipses as total.

least be a convergence, I think, in the structure of the argument, in vocabulary, and preferably also in the examples given to illustrate the argument before we can be reasonably certain that one text depends on another. Such dependence has been proved, in my opinion, in the following cases. In the digression on earthquakes Ammianus has followed Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* 2.28, as was noticed for the first time by Lindenbergius in his edition of 1609.¹³ The texts in question run as follows:

Gel. 2.28.1-2

quaenam esse causa videatur, quamobrem terrae tremores fiant, non modo his communibus hominum sensibus opinionibusque incompertum, sed ne inter physicas quidem philosophias satis constitit, ventorumne vi accidunt specus hiatusque terrae subeuntium aquarum ... propterea veteres Romani ... cautissimi ... dei nomen, ... statuere et edicere quiescebant, ne alium pro alio nominando falsa religione populum alligarent.

Amm. 17.7.9-11

ad ipsius enim veritatis arcana non modo haec nostra vulgaris inscitia, sed ne sempiterna quidem lucubrationibus longis nondum exhausta physicorum iurgia penetrarunt. unde ... observantibus sacerdotiis caute ne alio deo pro alio nominato ... piacula committantur. accidunt autem, ut opinioniones aestimant, inter quas Aristoteles aestuat et laborat, aut in cavernis minutis terrarum, quas Graece syringas appellamus ... aquis undabundis aut ... ut Anaxagoras affirmat, ventorum vi subeuntium ima terrarum.

The idea that not only laymen, but even experts are unable to discover the whole truth about the origins of the phenomenon is obviously an echo from Gellius, while Ammianus' flowery paraphrase *ne sempiterna quidem lucubrationibus longis nondum exhausta physicorum iurgia penetrarunt* is a fine example of the stylistic one-upmanship displayed in such imitations. The two main theories about the cause of earthquakes, viz. the presence of wind or water below the surface of the earth, are also put forward by Gellius. The typically Roman fear of imploring the wrong deity for help, expressed in the corrupt section 10 of Ammianus' account and without relevance for the argument, is taken from Gellius (for whom it is the central issue of his little treatise), as well as the explanation in the sequel why the earliest Greeks called Neptune Σεισίθων. The comparison of the two texts shows equally clearly that Ammianus has consulted other sources besides Gellius, which gave in greater detail the δοξαί of other philosophers.

The sources for the digression on eclipses cannot be named with cer-

¹³ Gellius was a highly important source for Ammianus; see Hertz 1874.

tainty, although Szidat has argued convincingly for a Neoplatonic milieu in which they should be located, on account of terminological affinity with Calcidius: 'man wird sich Ammians Quellen daher in dem Ueberlieferungsstrom zu denken haben, der zu Chalkidius führt' (Szidat 1977, 114). But far more important, it seems to me, both for the terminology and for the structure of this excursus, is Cicero's *De republica* 1.21-5, the description of Archimedes' *sphaera* or planetarium. Compare the opening phrases of Ammianus' digression with Cicero's description of the planetarium and of the conditions under which an eclipse occurs:

Cic. *Rep.* 1.22-5

in eo admirandum esse inventum Archimedi, quod excogitasset quem ad modum in dissimillimis motibus inaequabiles et varios cursus servaret una conversio ... certo illud (sc. a solar eclipse) *tempore fieri et necessario, cum tota se luna sub orbem solis subiecisset; itaque, etsi non omni intermenstruo, tamen id fieri non posse nisi intermenstruo tempore.*

Amm. 20.3.2

quod (sc. a solar eclipse) *alias non evenit ita perspicue, nisi cum post inaequales cursus intermenstruum lunae ad idem revocatur initium certis temporum intervallis, id est, cum in domicilio eiusdem signi tota repperitur luna sub sole liniamentis obiecta rectissimis.*

Secondly, in Ammianus the explanation of the solar eclipse is followed by a discussion of the phenomenon known as *sol geminus* or παρήλιος. This has no direct relation to the subject of the eclipse, as it is a meteorological, not an astronomical phenomenon. The reason is, I suppose, that in Cicero *Rep.* 1.21-5 the description of the planetarium was provoked by a question of Scipio concerning precisely the *sol geminus*.¹⁴ Finally, the enigmatic last section of the excursus on eclipses (20.3.12) deals with the unreliability of perception in studying the fixed stars. Again, it seems to be very loosely attached to the preceding exposition about the phases of the moon. The reason why Ammianus chose to conclude his digression with this observation may have been that *De republica* was still in his mind. In *Rep.* 6.16 Cicero explains that from the Milky Way stars can be seen that are invisible from the earth, that the stars are in reality much larger than we think and that the earth, as seen from the Milky Way, is relatively small.

In the remaining scientific digressions I have not been able to detect sources whose status as a model for Ammianus is as clear as that of

¹⁴ Cic. *Rep.* 1.19 *quaesierat ex me Scipio quidnam sentirem de hoc quod duo soles visos esse constaret.*

Gellius and Cicero in these two instances.¹⁵ Undeniably Ammianus used a variety of sources. Although it is *a priori* likely that he turned to Greek compendia, there seems to be very little in these digressions that could not have been found in Latin polymaths like Pliny, Seneca, Gellius and Solinus. The frequent use of Greek technical vocabulary does not prove that Ammianus derived his information from Greek handbooks either. Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* and Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* are full of Greek words. But whereas these authors do their best to find Latin equivalents for them, Ammianus parades his Greek technical vocabulary, possibly in order to present himself as *et diligentia Graecus et lingua*, as he had said about the historian Timagenes (15.9.2).

The language of the digressions is exceptionally difficult, even for Ammianus. This is not primarily due, I am afraid, to the complicated subject matter. It is always a relief to turn to Aristotle's accounts of these phenomena. They combine brevity with clarity without simplification. Ammianus combines prolixity with vagueness and at times one suspects him of expressing himself deliberately in a roundabout way, like a bad teacher who does not really know his subject. As Fontaine (1977, 55) has said with humour and justification about the passage on siege engines: 'il faut déjà bien connaître les engins pour s'y retrouver dans l'imprécision et les lacunes de cet exercice de style hermétique'. The opening section of the excursus on the rainbow may serve as an example (20.11.26):

accedebant arcus caelestis conspectus assidui. quae species unde ita figurari est solita, expositio brevis ostendet. halitus terrae calidiores et umoris spiramina conglobata in nubes exindeque disiecta in aspergines parvas ac radiorum fusione splendida facta supinantur volubiliter contra ipsum igneum orbem irimque conformant, ideo spatioso curvamine sinuosam, quod in nostro panditur mundo, quem sphaerae dimidiaae parti rationes physicae superponunt.

Several characteristics of the ornate style Ammianus adopts for his digressions are on show in this passage. First the combination of an abstract substantive with a genitive *arcus caelestis conspectus assidui*, meaning 'rainbows that were frequently seen'. Then the personificatio

¹⁵ Occasional verbal echoes from Suetonius and Solinus in the digression on the intercalary day are mentioned ad 26.1.12 by Marié (1984, 207 n.20).

in *expositio ostendet* and, more spectacularly, in *quem sphaerae dimidae parti rationes physicae superponunt*. Next the poetic *igneus orbis* for 'the sun', followed by a literary reminiscence (Ovid. *Met.* 11.590: *Iris et arcuato caelum curvamine signans*). With regard to the contents of this section, it must be said that the *halitus terrae calidiores* are the cause of wind and thunder and, unlike the *umoris spiramina*, irrelevant in this context. The last part of the sentence, from *ideo* onwards, explains the form of the rainbow. It is semi-circular, because of the shape of the firmament. The phrase becomes much easier to understand once it is compared with the opening statement of Aristotle's explanation of the rainbow: ἡμισφαίριον γὰρ ὄντος ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀρίζοντος κύκλου e.q.s. (*Mete.* 375 b 19).

As the careful stylization shows, Ammianus inserted his digressions at least partly *ornatus causa*, to embellish his narrative. In this respect he follows the example given by his Greek and Latin predecessors. Ammianus, however, goes into far greater detail and offers much more varied information than any of those with the possible exception of Herodotus. We must turn to another literary genre to find comparable expositions. These phenomena have been treated in Latin epic from Vergil onwards. Lucan, Silius and Statius all have passages on earthquakes in which the *δοξαί* of the philosophers are presented in the Lucretian manner, introduced by *seu...seu...sive*.¹⁶ In Ammianus' day this tradition was very much alive. His contemporary Claudian in one of his shorter poems (*c. min.* 29) gives a list of natural phenomena that reads like an index to Ammianus' scientific digressions:

*quisquis sollicita mundum ratione secutus
semina rimatur rerum, quo luna laborat
defectu, quae causa iubet pallescere solem,
unde rubescentes ferali crine cometae,
unde fluant venti, trepidae quis viscera terrae
concutiat motus, quis fulgura ducat hiatus,
unde tonent nubes, quo lumine floreat arcus,
hoc mihi quaerenti, si quid deprendere veri
mens valet, expediat e.q.s.*

And Cameron (1970, 344) remarks, in his study of Claudian: 'he likes to talk about the causes of earthquakes, volcanoes, comets and winds and wrote special poems on the sources of the Nile, the power of the magnet and a sphere of Archimedes.' It cannot be excluded *a priori* that Am-

¹⁶ For the incorporation of scientific themes into epic poetry see Schrijvers 1978 *passim*.

mianus in a period characterised by 'le mélange des genres' (Fontaine 1977, 438) took an ornament that belonged originally to epic poetry to embellish passages to which he attached great value because they imparted *scientia plena* to his readers.

The digressions are certainly not distributed at random, as Von Scala suggested. In many cases they serve the purpose of structuring the narrative, separating reports from different parts of the empire and providing a pause in the action. The digression on earthquakes is preceded by the account of the unsuccessful peace negotiations between Constantius and king Sapor of Persia and followed by the account of Julian's brilliant exploits in the West. The excursus on the plague during the siege of Amida not only gave Ammianus an opportunity to evoke similar catastrophes in epic and ancient history, it also fills the gap in the narrative caused by a cease fire between the two parties.¹⁷ A similar function has been attributed to the excursus on the intercalary day, which follows the report about the newly acclaimed emperor Valentinian's refusal to act on that ominous day.¹⁸ With regard to the digression on the solar eclipse, Szidat points out in his commentary that it separates the fall of Ursicinus, much admired by Ammianus, as described in 20.2 from Julian's rise to power, which is the subject of the following chapters. In his opinion, by interrupting the narrative in this way, Ammianus tries to prevent the reader from asking the awkward question why it is that Julian did not restore Ursicinus to his former position. Be that as it may, the function of the digression to mark an important transition in the narrative is evident.

But there is more to it. Events like eclipses, the appearance of the rainbow, of comets and meteors are violations of the natural order, bringing fear to men and showing the displeasure of the gods. They have always been interpreted as *omina*. In a world that is understood to be full of signs waiting to be interpreted, a deep significance is attributed to these impressive phenomena. They must be understood as mani-

¹⁷ Sabbah (1982, 148) writes: 'en bloquant le temps du récit par son caractère intemporel, l'exposé scientifique matérialise le trêve que s'accordèrent mutuellement les combattants.'

¹⁸ Richter 1989, 212: 'Um das Zögern Valentinians begreiflich zu machen und um das Verstehen des unheilvollen Tages gleichsam nachzuempfinden, legt Ammian verschiedene Ansichten über den Jahresverlauf dar.'

¹⁹ Rosen 1982, 84; Sabbah 1978, 553-7. Compare the fine observation by Mattiussi 1988, 24: 'Pour un regard orienté de manière à toujours lire le transcendant dans l'immanent, tout phénomène peut laisser transparaître une dimension radicalement autre qui n'enlève rien à ce que sont les choses d'un point de vue strictement objectif'. In their study about the tidal wave in 365, the subject of the digression in 26.10, Jacques and Bousquet (1984) offer many

festations of the cosmic συμπαθεια, as Nature's reaction to human acts. For that reason, the symbolic 'Deutung' of the digressions, proposed in particular by Rosen and Sabbah, seems to me entirely convincing.¹⁹ Ammianus, it is true, never spoils the effect of this digressions by telling us in as many words the meaning of these ominous events,²⁰ but it is the narrative context that puts them in perspective.

It is time to return to Seneca. In all probability, the philosopher would not have appreciated Ammianus' accounts of natural phenomena any more than those of Ephorus. He would have been justified in accusing the historian not merely of being naive, but even of wilfully manipulating the facts. It would, however, be a shallow criticism to say that Ammianus inserted these digressions only for the sake of variety or as a pedantic show of learning. Apart from their function in structuring the narrative, they serve as signals or echoes on a superhuman level of the actions of his *dramatis personae*.

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parallels from pagan and Christian authors for this symbolic interpretation of natural disasters. See now Kelly 2004.

²⁰ Although he comes close to it in 20.11.30, where he says about the rainbow: *indiciū est permutationis aurae, permutatio* being his term for a change of power (15.3.7, 21.14.1, 26.6.9, 29.2.17).

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

HIDDEN POLEMICS

Ammianus' Digression on Egypt (Res gestae 21.15.16)

1. *Ammianus and Christianity: explicit and implicit comments*

One of the most interesting problems concerning the fourth century historian Ammianus Marcellinus is his attitude towards Christianity. There is consensus nowadays that the historian was a pagan, whose personal beliefs might, without disrespect, be summed up as a form of 'Vulgärneuplatonismus' (Szidat 1982). Opinions differ on the question whether Christianity was a subject of great importance or rather of marginal interest to the historian. The small number of explicit references to religious matters in the remaining books of the *Res gestae* would suggest the latter, especially since in these books the author is dealing with the reigns of Constantius II Augustus and Julian, to whom religious policy was obviously of primary importance. The tone, moreover, in which Ammianus speaks about the Christians is never stridently polemical, as witness e.g. the following remark on bishop Georgius of Alexandria: *professionisque suae oblitus, quae nihil nisi iustum suadet et lene, ad delatorum ausa feralia desciscebatur* 'forgetful of his calling, which counselled only justice and mildness, he descended to the informer's deadly practices' (22.11.5).¹

Still, there are many places in which Ammianus, without naming Christianity, can be shown to defend beliefs that are contrary to the decrees of Christian emperors like Constantius and Theodosius the Great in the *Codex Theodosianus*. His digressions on divination and the *genius* in 21.1.7-14 and 21.14.3-5 are cases in point (see Den Boeft *et al.* 1991, 11-2; 214-5). The long excursus on Egypt and the Egyptians in 22.15-6, which has not been studied before in this light, is another one, as I will try to show.

¹ On Ammianus' attitude towards Christianity in general see Hunt (1985); Neri (1985; 1992); Matthews (1989, 435-51). The translations from Ammianus are taken from Hamilton & Wallace-Hadrill (1986). Translations from other authors are taken from the Loeb editions, unless it is stated otherwise. Where no translator is named, the translation is my own.

2. Ammianus on Egypt: literary antecedents in pagan authors

At first reading one is struck by Ammianus' ambivalent attitude towards the Egyptians. He describes them as *genus hominum controversum et assuetudine perplexius litigandi semper laetissimum maximeque avidum multiplicatum reposcere, si compulsori quidquam dederit* (22.6.1),² an assessment repeated in 22.16.23; *ad singulos motus excandescentes, controversi et reposcones acerrimi*.³ On the other hand Egypt is pictured as the cradle of religion, 22.16.20: *ubi primum homines longe ante alios ad varia religionum incunabula, ut dicitur, pervenerunt et initia prima sacrorum caute tumentur condita scriptis arcanis*.⁴ We find here the same discrepancy between Egypt as an ideological concept and the Egyptians in day to day life that is typical also of Ammianus' view on Rome and the Romans. For Rome, the 'venerable City', the 'temple of the whole world' (17.4.13), no praise is high enough, but for the Romans he had actually lived with in Rome itself he did not have a good word to say, as appears from the two amusing, satirical 'scènes de la vie romaine' in 14.6 and 28.4.⁵

In order to put Ammianus' digression into perspective, we must realize that Egypt had fascinated Greek and Roman authors from the days of Solon, Herodotus and Plato and held its fascination until Late Antiquity. Interestingly, the conceptualization of Egypt and the Egyptians during this long period is as ambivalent as the views of Ammianus. On the one side Egypt is pictured as the cradle of religion, wisdom and science and we read often about wise Egyptian priests who are acquainted with age-old philosophies and have magical power. On the other hand the Egyptians themselves are portrayed as unreliable, deceitful, fanatic and stupid.

For the study of Ammianus' digression two Greek texts are of paramount importance, the description of Egypt by Herodotus in book two of his *Histories*, and Plato's *Timaeus*. It is unlikely that Ammianus has consulted them directly. Fornara (1992b), in one of his important recent studies on Ammianus, has shown convincingly, in my opinion, that Ammianus turned primarily to Latin sources for information. Still, almost

² 'a contentious race, who take delight in the complexities of litigation, and are particularly eager to demand excessive compensation for any payment that they have been constrained to make'.

³ 'easily roused to excited gestures, quarrelsome and most persistent in pursuing a debt'.

⁴ 'it was there that men, long before others, discovered various religions in what may be called their cradle, and now carefully preserve the origins of worship in their esoteric scriptures'.

⁵ See chapter 25 in this book for an analysis of the second satirical description.

every detail in Ammianus' discussion of the Nile and the Egyptian *mirabilia* goes back ultimately to the second Book of Herodotus. Even more important for the issue we are dealing with is the well-known passage in Plato's *Timaeus* 21e–22d, where Solon on his visit to Saïs is told by a priest that the Greeks are children compared to the Egyptians, because their culture had been destroyed more than once by floods and conflagrations, from which Egypt had been preserved by the Nile. This text is the ultimate source for the positive conceptualization of Egypt, which runs through Greek and, to a lesser degree, Latin literature.

In Latin literature the negative conceptualization turns out to be, at least quantitatively, more important. In one of the earliest Latin texts about Egypt, Cic. *Rep.* 3.14, a typically ambivalent attitude is found:

*nunc autem, si quis ... multas et varias gentis et urbis despiceret ... possit, videat primum in illa incorrupta maxime gente Aegyptiorum, quae plurimorum saeculorum et eventorum memoriam litteris continet, bovem quendam putari deum, quem Apim Aegyptii nominant, multaque alia portenta apud eosdem et cuiusque generis beluas numero consecratas deorum.*⁶

On the one hand Egypt is spoken of in positive terms as a country that has kept itself pure and where written records of the events of many ages have been kept, but on the other hand the animal worship of the Egyptians is hinted at in negative terms like *portenta* and *beluae*.⁷ Apart from their animal worship the Egyptians were notorious for their religious fanaticism and their unruliness. The former characteristic inspired Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire, for which the opening sentence sets the tone: *Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens / Aegyptos portenta colat? crocodilum adorat / pars haec.*⁸ Pliny the Younger, in his *Panegyric*, chapter 31, inserted a surprisingly vehement attack on the Egyptians, calling them a *ventosa et insolens natio*,⁹ who thought they held power over Rome, because the City depended on the Alexandrian corn-fleet for its maintenance.

Only a short time later, however, the positive aspects of Egyptian cul-

⁶ 'but in actual fact, if one could visit many diverse nations and cities ... he would see first of all in Egypt, famed as ever changeless, which preserves records of the events of countless ages, a bull, which the Egyptians call Apis, is deemed a god, and many other monsters and animals of every sort are held sacred as divine'.

⁷ On the appreciation of Egyptian animal worship in Antiquity see Smelik & Hemelrijk (1984).

⁸ 'Who has not heard, Volusius, of the monstrous deities / Those crazy Egyptians worship? One lot adores crocodiles' (Green).

⁹ 'a puffed up and insolent nation'.

ture become predominant in the works of Plutarch and Apuleius. Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* is by far the most extensive study of Egypt that has come down to us from Antiquity. As a true follower of Plato, Plutarch speaks with deep respect about the ancient traditions of Egypt and even tries to make their animal worship acceptable to his readers by symbolic interpretation. As for Apuleius, it is not a mere literary flourish when he says in the introduction to his *Metamorphoses*, 1.1: *modo si papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam non spreveris inspicere*.¹⁰ As Kenney (1990, 6-7), whose translation is quoted here, has pointed out in his edition of *Cupid and Psyche*, this should be taken as a hint of the ultimate source of the ass-story: in Egyptian cult the ass, as symbolic of the evil Seth and Typhon, was the enemy of Isis, whose praise will be sung in the last book of the *Metamorphoses*.

3. Christian authors on Egypt

An important development in the conceptualization of Egypt is introduced by Christian authors. Its place in Christian literature has been well studied by Habermehl in his recent book on the *Passio Perpetuae*. In Tertullian Egypt is portrayed, in accordance with the Old Testament, as the house of bondage, from which Israel was led to the promised land. The antiquity of Egyptian religion is not denied, but instead of being a ground for respect it is turned against Egypt, which is called the cradle of superstition: *de Aegypto superstitio est* ('superstition comes from Egypt', *Spect.* 8.5). Elsewhere Tertullian makes Egypt a symbol of the secular world, *adv. Marc.* 3.13.10: *Aegyptus nonnumquam totus orbis intellegitur ... superstitionis et maledictionis elogio*.¹¹ This symbolic interpretation of Egypt has been adopted by several Christian authors like Jerome and, above all, Saint Augustine. To conclude this brief and necessarily rough outline I quote from Cyprian the following passage, which illustrates the Christian conceptualization of Egypt in a nutshell, *ad Fort.* 7: *in Exodo Iudaicus populus ad umbram nostri et imaginem praefiguratus, cum Deo tutore et vindice evasisset Pharaonis atque Aegypti, id est diaboli et saeculi durissimam servitutem*.¹²

¹⁰ 'always providing you are not too proud to look at Egyptian paper written with the acuteness of a reed from the Nile.'

¹¹ 'Egypt is sometimes interpreted as the World, on account of its superstition and its blasphemy.'

¹² 'in Exodus the people of Israel is described as the prefiguration of ourselves, as it had

4. *The digressions on Egypt in the Res gestae*

Turning now to Ammianus' digression on Egypt, it is important to note that it had been preceded by three other essays on Egypt. As Ammianus informs us, he had already written at some length on this subject when dealing with the reigns of Hadrian and Severus. These passages have been lost and Ammianus gives us no information about their contents. What has been preserved, however, is his description in 17.4 of the obelisk that was transported to Rome by Constantius and erected there. Particularly important in this passage is the Greek translation of the hieroglyphic inscription on the obelisk. In spite of the fact that it is a text in honour of King Rameses, as the Greek translation by Hermapion plainly shows, Ammianus sees in these hieroglyphs a manifestation of primeval wisdom handed down from hoary antiquity by the sages of Egypt, 17.4.8: *formarum autem innumeras notas, hieroglyphicas appellatas, quas ei* (sc. the obelisk) *undique videmus incisas, initialis sapientiae vetus insignivit auctoritas.*¹³

Equally important is the comparison between Constantine the Great, who had not hesitated to dislodge the obelisk from the temple precinct in Karnak, and Augustus who had left the obelisk untouched because of its sacred character, 17.4.12-3:

*discant, qui ignorant, veterem principem translatis aliquibus hunc intactum ideo praeterisse, quod deo Soli speciali munere dedicatus fixusque intra ambitiosi templi delubra, quae contingi non poterant, tamquam apex omnium eminebat. verum Constantinus id parvi ducens avulsam hanc molem sedibus suis nihilque committere in religionem recte existimans, si ablatum uno templo miraculum Romae sacraret, id est in templo mundi totius.*¹⁴

It would take too long to discuss this passage in detail, but it should be noted that Ammianus defends Constantine by saying that he was right in thinking (*recte existimans*) that it was no sacrilege if he brought the obelisk from one temple to the common temple of the whole world, that is, to Rome. Rike (1987), who took the title of his book on religion

escaped with the help of God from the harsh slavery under Pharaoh and Egypt, which means of the Devil and this world'.

¹³ 'the innumerable characters called hieroglyphs which we see inscribed on every face (of the obelisk) owe their form to tradition handed down from the sages of early times'.

¹⁴ 'But let me tell those who do not know that the reason why that early emperor left this obelisk untouched when he moved some others was that it was dedicated as a special offer-

in Ammianus from this passage, seems to have overlooked this important detail.

The immediate reason for inserting the last digression on Egypt was the description of the finding of the bull Apis during Julian's stay in Antioch in 362 (22.14). According to the Egyptians this was a favourable omen, as Ammianus points out, boding well for the Persian campaign which Julian was preparing. The story is especially important since we have here in all probability the last reported manifestation of the bull Apis. It is, however, uncertain whether Ammianus was aware of this. The digression is in two parts. Chapter 15 deals first with the Nile, a subject directly linked with Apis. It is in itself a fine specimen of the scientific digressions that Ammianus likes to insert into his narrative. In the second part of chapter 15 the Egyptian fauna is described and Ammianus duly recounts the *mirabilia* of Egypt, described so often in imitation of Herodotus. Ammianus evidently follows Solinus, who in his turn took his knowledge from Pliny the Elder. It is a very amusing piece of writing, in which one is almost tempted to think that Ammianus did have a sense of humour after all, especially in the passage about that most intelligent of animals, the hippopotamus.

4.1 *The revelatory character of the hieroglyphs*

In the last sections of chapter 15 Ammianus has this to say about what he calls the *syringes*, 22.15.30:

*sunt et syringes subterranei quidam et flexuosi secessus, quos, ut fertur, periti rituum vetustorum adventare diluvium praescii metuentesque, ne caerimoniarum oblitteraretur memoria, penitus operosis digestos fodinis per loca diversa struxerunt et excisis parietibus volucrum ferarumque genera multa sculpsērunt et animalium species innumeras multas, quas hierographicas litteras appellarunt.*¹⁵

ing to the Sun God and placed in the sacred precinct of a magnificent temple, to which access was forbidden. There it towered over the whole structure. Constantine, however, made small account of this and rightly supposed that he would be committing no sacrilege if he removed this wonderful object from one temple and dedicated it at Rome, which may be called the temple of the whole world'.

¹⁵ 'there are also subterranean fissures and winding passages called *syringes*, which, it is said, those acquainted with the ancient rites, since they had fore-knowledge that a deluge was coming, and feared that the memory of the ceremonies might be destroyed, dug in the earth in many places with great labour; and on the walls of these caverns they carved many kinds of birds and beasts, and those countless forms of animals which they call hierographic writing'.

Ammianus is following an unknown Greek source here, as appears from his use of the word *syringes* for what is now known as the Underground Tombs in the Valley of Kings. They belonged to the tourist attractions of Egypt, as is evident from a passage in Heliodorus (*Aeth.* 2.27.3), where they are mentioned among the marvels of Egypt along with the pyramids with which they are normally bracketed. These tombs have been visited by hundreds of tourists from all over the Empire, as witness the numerous inscriptions collected and published by Baillet (1922-1926). Particularly fascinating is a group of inscriptions made by men calling themselves Platonists, e.g. 'I, Lysimachus, a Platonist philosopher, paid a visit' and 'may Plato be propitious to us even here'.¹⁶ Casson (1974, 194) has ventured the theory that these Platonists may have thought that this was the place where Plato had received his instruction during his stay in Egypt, mentioned by Ammianus in this digression, and that they even identified the underground tombs with the cave of Plato's famous allegory in *Resp.* 7. It seems likely that Hippolytus and Jamblichus are thinking of these same underground tombs as the places where Pythagoras had received his instruction from the Egyptian priests.¹⁷ These speculations are not in Ammianus. He does emphasize, however, the revelatory character of these inscriptions in what he calls *hierographicae litterae* (a hapax in Latin literature) containing instructions about religious rites from before the floods. In the digression about the obelisk Ammianus had written, 17.4.10:

*non enim ut nunc litterarum numerus praestitutus et facilis exprimit,
quidquid humana mens concipere potest, ita prisci quoque scriptitarunt
Aegyptii, sed singulae litterae singulis nominibus serviebant et verbis;
nonnumquam significabant integros sensus.*¹⁸

This mistaken notion, linked with the general Egyptomania of the period, explains the revelatory character attributed to the hieroglyphs by

¹⁶ Baillet 1922-6, 1289 and 1263.

¹⁷ Hippol. *Ref.* 1.2.18 'They say that Pythagoras learnt the numbers and the measures from the Egyptians. He was deeply impressed by the wisdom of the priests ... and is said to have studied in peace and quiet in their subterranean sanctuaries', Jambl. *V.P.* 19 'He studied astronomy and geometry for twenty-two years without interruption in the sanctuaries of the Egyptians and was initiated in their mysteries.'

¹⁸ 'the writing of the early Egyptians was not like ours, in which a fixed and simple series of letters expresses all the ideas of the human mind; for them a single character served to signify a single substantive or verb, and sometimes, indeed, a complete sentence'.

Neoplatonic thinkers. As Iversen (1961, 43) puts it: 'They became illustrations of the Neo-Platonic conception of the allegorical nature of things and as such they remained integral elements of the philosophical discussions of the period until the interest in them waned away, characteristically enough, with Neo-Platonism itself.' The most important text in this context is from Plotinus, who describes the hieroglyph as follows, *Enn.* 5.8.6: ὥς ἄρα τις καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ σοφία ἕκαστον ἐστὶν ἄγαλμα καὶ ὑποκειμένον καὶ ἀθρόον καὶ οὐ διανόησις οὐδὲ βούλευσις.¹⁹ It is probably on account of this alleged revelatory character of the hieroglyphs that the Platonist tourist Burichios wrote on the wall of one of the Tombs in the Valley of the Kings how much he deplored not being able to interpret these signs: 'I, Burichios, a scholar from Ascalon, blamed myself for not knowing the language' (Baillet 1922-6, 1405).

4.2 Alexandria and the Serapeum

We turn now to the second part of the Egyptian digression which deals with Alexandria. Ammianus has a deep respect for this city, and in particular for its famous Serapeum. He calls it the most impressive temple in the world after the Capitol of Rome, 22.16.12:

*his accedunt altis sufflata fastigiis templa, inter quae eminet Serapeum, quod licet minuatur exilitate verborum, atriis tamen columnatis amplissimis et spirantibus signorum figmentis et reliqua operum multitudine ita est exornatum, ut post Capitolium, quo se venerabilis Roma in aeternum attollit, nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat.*²⁰

The passage provides a *terminus ante quem* for the *Res gestae*, because it is hardly conceivable that Ammianus would have written in this vein about the Serapeum after its destruction by a fanatical mob of Christians led by Egyptian monks in the summer of 391. It is in any case a moving passage considering that soon after Ammianus had written these words, the temple would be burnt, an event which made so deep an impression on the contemporary intellectual elite, that Rufinus

¹⁹ 'an object in itself, an immediate unity, not an aggregate of discursive reasoning and deliberate planning', in MacKenna's translation.

²⁰ 'there are also many temples with lofty roofs, chief among them the Temple of Serapis. Its splendour is such that mere words can only do it an injustice, but its great halls of columns and its wealth of lifelike statues and other works of art make it, next to the Capitol, which is the symbol of the eternity of immemorial Rome, the most magnificent building in the whole world'.

thought it a fitting end for his church history, since it signalled the final victory of Christianity.

4.3 *The ideological contents of the digression*

The most explicitly ideological passage in the digression runs as follows, 22.16.20-1:

*sed si intellegendi divini editionem multiplicem et praesensionum originem mente vegeta quisquam voluerit replicare, per mundum omnem inveniet mathemata huiusmodi ab Aegypto circumlata, ubi primum homines longe ante alios ad varia religionum incunabula, ut dicitur, pervenerunt et initia prima sacrorum caute tuentur condita scriptis arcanis.*²¹

The idea that the art of divination had come from Egypt is already in Herodotus. More relevant for the cultural environment of Ammianus is that the whole of the third book of Jamblichus' *De mysteriis Aegyptiorum* was devoted to this subject. As for the superior antiquity of Egyptian religion, that is a commonplace, formulated in Latin literature by Ammianus' near contemporary Macrobius, *Sat.* 7.13.10: *in Aegypto, divinarum omnium disciplinarum compote*.²² Even the Christians, despite their traditional Egyptophobia, recognized this claim and turned it to their own advantage, as did for instance John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matth.* 9, PG 57, 87a καὶ τὴν ποιητῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων καὶ μάγων μήτερα, καὶ τὴν πᾶν εἶδος μαγγανείας εὐρούσαν ... ταύτην ὅψει νῦν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀλιεῦσι καλλωπιζομένην.²³

Ammianus goes on to say that the greatest philosophers of Antiquity received their instruction in Egypt. The first philosopher he mentions is Pythagoras, whose stay in the subterranean sanctuaries has already been mentioned. Then follows Anaxagoras, who learnt to predict earthquakes during his period of study in Egypt, and Solon, who was helped by Egyptian priests in establishing the Athenian constitution. The series

²¹ I give my own translation of this difficult text, as I think Hamilton's translation is inadequate: 'If one is willing to investigate attentively the manifold revelations that help to understand the divine, and the origin of divination, he will find that learning of this kind has been spread abroad from Egypt through the whole world. There for the first time, long before other men, they discovered the cradles, so to speak, of the various religions, and now carefully guard the beginnings of worship, stored up in secret writings.'

²² 'in Egypt, teacher of all divine knowledge'.

²³ 'you will find that she (Egypt), who is the mother of poets, philosophers and magi-

culminates in Plato, 22.16.22: *ex his fontibus per sublimia gradiens sermonum amplitudine Iovis aemulus Platon visa Aegypto militavit sapientia gloriosa*.²⁴ Ammianus is probably following an epitome in this passage of Neo-Platonic inspiration, like he did in his digressions on divination and the Genius. This confirms the results obtained by Szidat (1983) in his study on the relations between some digressions in Ammianus and the writings of Porphyry and Macrobius. Szidat did not pay attention to the Egyptian digression, possibly because on the face of it, it is just a geographical essay. I hope to have shown by now that there is much more to it than meets the eye at a first reading.

5. Two parallel texts

The deep reverence for the Egyptian tradition that is typical for this digression is paralleled in two rather obscure texts dating from the late fourth century. The first is the so-called *Expositio totius orbis et gentium*, which in its rather idiosyncratic Latin leaves no doubt about its ideological preference, *Exp.* 34-6:

[*Nilus fert*] viros similiter nobiles, deos colentes eminenter: nusquam enim deorum mysteria sic perficitur quomodo ibi ab antiquo et usque modo, et paene ipsa omni orbi terrarum tradidit deos colere ... et dii coluntur eminenter et templum Serapis ibi est ... nusquam ... aut aedificium aut dispositio templi aut religio talis invenitur.²⁵

What is especially interesting in this text is the admiration for the Serapeum, which for Ammianus was the second most sacred temple in the world, after the Capitol, but here is simply called the holiest and most beautiful temple of all.

Even more outspoken in its praise for Egypt is the Hermetic treatise *Asclepius*, ascribed by Saint Augustine to Apuleius, but in all probability

cians and the inventor of all forms of wizardry, now prides herself on the fishermen.'

²⁴ 'Plato drew on this source, and it was after a visit to Egypt that he achieved his highest flights in language whose sublimity rivalled Jove himself, and served with glory on the field of wisdom'.

²⁵ '[The Nile brings forth] men that are equally admirable, who honour the gods above all others. For nowhere have the mysteries been celebrated with such devotion ever since the days of old. One might almost say that it has taught the whole world how to honour the gods ... Apart from this there is also the temple of Serapis. Nowhere such a building, such a layout of the temple, such piety is found'.

dating from the last decade of the fourth century, since the lament for the loss of the old religion and the desertion of the temples reads like a *vaticinium ex eventu* of the destruction of the Serapeum after which Egypt, here represented as the mirror of heaven and called *templum totius mundi* (!), will be inhabited by Scythians, Indians and other barbarians, *Ascl.* 24:

*e terris enim et ad caelum recursura divinitas linqueturque Aegyptus
terraque, sedes religionum quae fuit, viduata numinum praesentia
destituetur ... tunc terra ista sanctissima, sedes delubrorum atque templo-
rum, sepulchrorum erit mortuorumque plenissima.*²⁶

Now we have come full circle, since this is diametrically opposed to the Christian representation of Egypt as the symbol of this world and of the realm of darkness, as in the text quoted from Cyprian. These extremes show that it became impossible to write about Egypt in dispassionate terms. One had to take sides, for or against Egypt as the cradle of the old religion, for or against the Serapeum as symbol of paganism. Ammianus does this in a rather measured way, but he leaves his readers no doubt as to which side he is on. And they will have read his praise of Egypt and its culture as a protest against the overwhelming predominance that Christianity began to have in his days.

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²⁶ 'for the gods will leave the earth and return to heaven and Egypt will be deserted and its land, once the centre of religions, will be left alone and devoid of the presence of the gods ... then it will come to pass that this most holy of lands, the home of sanctuaries and temples, will be full of graves and corpses'.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

SENIUM IMPERII

At the end of his great study on Ammianus, John Matthews (1989, 470) speculates about Ammianus' expectations of the future. One would a priori suppose a historian who ended his work with the disastrous battle of the Romans against the Goths at Adrianople (378), during which the emperor Valens was killed, to be pessimistic. There is no doubt that Ammianus fully realized the grave consequences of this defeat, as did many of his contemporaries, such as Ambrose, who in the funeral oration for his brother Satyrus uses the expressions *finis mundi* and *totius orbis excidia*.¹ Ammianus devotes a whole chapter (31.1) to the *omina* that announced the disaster, in 31.13.11 he speaks about *numquam pensabilia damna* suffered by the Romans and he compares Adrianople explicitly to Cannae in 31.13.19. Still, in Ammianus' view Roman history did not come to a halt after the Gothic victory and he does not share feeling of Ambrose that the end is near. Several scholars have pointed out that the last event described by Ammianus is the, admittedly treacherous, liquidation of a large number of Goths by the *magister militiae* Julius, whose *efficacia salutaris et velox* he admires (31.16.8). This holds a message for the reader: the situation is not hopeless and resolute military action can repair the damage caused by the Gothic invasion.²

Ammianus thus clung to his belief in the eternity of Rome even after the Balkan frontier of the empire had been forced by the Goths. With hindsight we know that this invasion finally led to Alaric's plunder of Rome in 410. Gimazane was, however, utterly unjustified in accusing Ammianus of blindness for not seeing these consequences. As Paschoud has pointed out, in Ammianus' days not one pagan historian could envisage the end of the Roman empire, and even in the opinion of Christian writers the end of the Roman empire would coincide with the end of the world.³

¹ Ambr. exc. *Sat.* 1.30. For a survey of the reactions to the battle of Adrianople see Straub 1972, 195-214, Paschoud 1967, 188-208, and Lenski 1997.

² The importance of this event in the opinion of Ammianus is even more evident if Zuckermann 1991 is right in maintaining that Ammianus has forced the chronology in order to bring the action of Julius into the context of the battle of Adrianople. See also Rosen 1991.

³ Gimazane 1889, 379; Paschoud 1967, 68.

Quite often Ammianus comments in passing on his own time, which is, in his opinion, far inferior not only to the old Republic, the traditional *thesaurus exemplorum*, but also to the more recent history of e.g. Marcus Aurelius.⁴ There is, however, only one passage in which he gives us an idea how he saw the development of Roman history and what he thought about the central theme of this *Festschrift*, the end of time. Using a traditional metaphor, he adapts it to his personal views in opposition to authors who had made use of the same metaphor before him. I refer, of course, to the well-known *Lebensaltervergleichnis* in 14.6.3-6.

It is among the most discussed passages in the *Res gestae*,⁵ but, as so often, a closer inspection of the text raises fresh questions. Moreover, the widely divergent interpretations put forward in the important recent studies by Matthews and Barnes,⁶ call for a new examination of the evidence. The short digression stands at the beginning of Ammianus' excursus on Rome in 14.6. Ammianus supposes that his readers will wonder why it is that in speaking of Rome he has nothing to report but riots, taverns and similar banalities. In order to answer this question, he sketches in an elevated style the course of Roman history, after which he comes up with the slightly disappointing answer that the citizens of Rome, both the aristocrats and the common people, fail to live up to the greatness of their city.

Ammianus distinguishes four stages in Roman history, which he compares with the ages of man:

- *infantia- pueritia (ab incunabulis primis usque ad pueritiae tempus extremum)*
- *aetas adulta*
- *iuventus (in iuvenem erectus et virum)*
- *senium.*

Apart from some minor discrepancies the same pattern is found in Florus *Pr.* 4-8, Lactantius *Inst.* 7.15.14-5 (who quotes Seneca as his source) and the *Historia Augusta*, *Car.* 2-3.1, allegedly written by Vopiscus.⁷ I

⁴ In whose days *nondum solutioris vitae mollitie sobria vetustas infecta ... unanimanti ardore summi et infimi inter se congruentes ad speciosam pro republica mortem tamquam ad portum aliquem tranquillum properabant et placidum*, 31.5.14.

⁵ From the large number of studies of the *Lebensaltervergleichnis* I quote only those I found really useful: Klotz 1901; Haüssler 1964; Demandt 1965, 115-47; *id.* 1978, 37-45; Paschoud 1967; Drexler 1974, 155-65; Alonso-Núñez 1982; Brodka 1998, 56-64.

⁶ Matthews 1989, 414-6; *id.* 1986, 22; Barnes 1998, 173-5.

⁷ The texts are quoted by Haüssler, 314-5.

subscribe to the *communis opinio* that the *vita Cari* is closer to the version of Seneca than the other two and that Ammianus' version is modelled on Florus.⁸

The first argument that is adduced time and again to prove this dependence is the correspondence between Florus *pr. 2 ut ad constituendum eius imperium contendisse Virtus et Fortuna videatur* and Ammianus' introductory section 14.6.3 *foedere pacis aeternae Virtus convenit atque Fortuna*. Ammianus' addition *plerumque dissidentes*, however, as I pointed out long ago,⁹ rather suggests a different model, viz. Plutarch's *De fortuna Romanorum*, of which the opening words are: αἱ πολλοὺς πολλακίς ἡγωνισμέναι καὶ μεγάλους ἀγῶνας Ἀρετὴ καὶ Τύχη (316 C), and where we read in 316 E: εἰ καὶ πάνν πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἀεὶ πολέμοῦσι καὶ διαφέρονται (cf. *plerumque dissidentes*) Τύχη καὶ Ἀρετὴ, πρὸς γε τηλικαύτην σύμπεξιν ἀρχῆς καὶ δυνάμεως εἰκὸς ἐστὶν αὐτὰς σπεισάμενας συνελθεῖν (cf. *foedere pacis aeternae Virtus convenit atque Fortuna*).¹⁰ Nevertheless, the remaining textual correspondences with Florus' preface leave no doubt that Ammianus knew and imitated the epitomator. It is true that the part played by *Virtus* and *Fortuna* in bringing about the grandeur of Rome belonged to the standard topics in rhetorical discussions. Still, the problem must have held a special meaning for Ammianus, since in his work he had to try to find an answer to the question how Julian, who *intento studio coluit omnes* (sc. *virtutes*, 25.4.1) could have come to such a disastrous end. The speech delivered by Julian on his death-bed painfully illustrates the fact that a man, however virtuous, is in the last resort dependent on fortune for success: (*tametsi*) *prosperitas simul utilitasque consultorum non ubique concordent, quoniam coeptorum eventus superae sibi vindicent potestates* (25.3.17).

At the beginning of the digression Ammianus professes his belief in the eternity of Rome with the words *victura dum erunt homines*.¹¹ This

⁸ Demandt 1978, 39. Haüssler has argued convincingly for Varro *De vita populi Romani* as the common source of Seneca and Florus.

⁹ 'Das Proömium der Carusvita', paper given at the *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium* 1988. See also source of Seneca and Florus.

¹⁰ For the importance of Plutarchus as a source on intellectual history for Ammianus see Den Boeft, J. *et al.* (1991) (henceforth quoted as *Commentary*) chapter 14 *passim*.

¹¹ The ambiguity of *victura* is often remarked upon, but Barnes, (174 n.35) is certainly right in saying that the notion of victoriousness is irrelevant in the context. On the other hand, Barnes goes too far when he suggest that it might mean "live on in an increasingly squalid existence". In using phrases like the present one or 26.1.14 *victura cum saeculis Roma* Ammianus does not evoke a pathetic Tithonus-like Rome.

idea admittedly 'had a great emotional value for Ammianus',¹² but it looks strangely out of place at the beginning of a digression on the ages of Rome with its inevitable connotations of transience and mortality. By pronouncing this statement right at the start, Ammianus anticipates the outcome of the digression in section 5. Let us be more patient and follow the phases one by one.

Childhood

The childhood phase is less clearly defined by Ammianus than by Seneca and Florus. Seneca, and in his wake 'Vopiscus', had differentiated between Rome's *infantia* under Romulus and its *pueritia* lasting until the expulsion of the kings. Possibly the *incunabula* mentioned by Ammianus are a reminiscence of this subdivision. In Florus *pueritia* lasts from the foundation of Rome until the end of the regal period, 250 years. Ammianus also gives a round number, *annis fere trecentis*, which is clearly no improvement on his model. Apart from the vagueness of the number, the period of 300 years brings us to the year 450, which does not mark the end of an epoch in the history of Rome. Moreover, as De Jonge has observed in his commentary, one has only to think of the sack of Rome by the Gauls and the Latin wars in the first half of the fourth century to realize that the *circummurana bella* had not really come to an end at that time. We must conclude that Ammianus, preferring paraphrase to quotation, as is his wont, has blurred the clear distinction found in the other accounts.¹³ What remains is the distinction between the period during which the Roman people had to fight wars at its doorstep, inspired by Florus' phrase *circum ipsam urbem luctatus est*, and the next phase, during which it gained supremacy over all of Italy.

Adolescence

The second stage is less problematic. In Florus it is characterised by the simple phrase *Italiam subegit*, another period of 250 years, which brings

¹² See *Commentary* ad 21.12.2; add to the literature quoted there Paschoud 1986.

¹³ Ammianus' mannerisms in adapting his sources are illustrated in the *Commentary* ad 21.5.7.

us to the threshold of the Punic Wars, in 264.¹⁴ The flat *multiplices bellorum aerumnae*¹⁵ in Ammianus' version is certainly no improvement on Florus' *tempus viris armis incitatissimum*, which has the merit of explaining the comparison of this period with hotheaded youth. It is doubtful that Ammianus was thinking of any wars in particular. There was no lack of them in the period 450-264. In his effort to vary the wording of his source, Ammianus writes *Alpes transcendit et fretum*, which has been misinterpreted in the otherwise excellent article of Häussler. According to him, both in Florus 1.26.9, where Florus recapitulates this phase (*in qua totam inter Alpes fretumque Italiam armis subegit*), and in Ammianus *Alpes* refers to the Apennines. While admitting that *Alpes* is occasionally used to indicate high mountains in general, the word is never used in this sense either by Florus or by Ammianus.¹⁶ Strictly speaking, of course, the Romans only crossed the Alps for military purposes at a much later date. The *fretum* can only be the Strait of Messina, since in Florus' version it was the attraction of Sicily that made the Romans venture across the sea and brought them into conflict with Carthago.¹⁷

Maturity

The third *aetas* is marked by victories in all corners of the world: *ex omni plaga, quam orbis ambit immensus, reportavit laureas et triumphos*. Ammianus is evidently amplifying Florus' lapidary phrase *ad Caesarem Augustum CC anni, quibus totum orbem pacavit*. The demarcation of the period in Florus' *Lebensaltervergleich* is clear: it ends with Augustus. Again, a comparison with Florus' recapitulation at the end of his epitome, in 4.12.64, shows that Florus was thinking of the closure of the temple of Janus as the culmination of this period. He does not distinguish between the successive closures of the Janus temple in the years 29, 25 and 8, but telescopes them into one, which, he says, took place *septin-*

¹⁴ The comparison with Florus and in particular the identification of *fretum* with the Strait of Messina proves that Alonso-Nuñez (1982, 22) is wrong in taking the battle of Zama as the end of this period in Ammianus.

¹⁵ *Aerumnae* is found 44 times in Ammianus. See *Commentary* 20.7.7 and compare 27.4.4 *post multiplices pugnarum aerumnas*.

¹⁶ Florus 2.3.2. *Insubres Galli ... sitae sub Alpibus, id est sub ipsis Italia faucibus* shows how Florus interprets the term. Ammianus too always uses it in its modern meaning.

¹⁷ Florus 2.2.1, who uses *fretum* with the double meaning of 'sea-strait' and 'period of transition' (*fretum illud adolescentiae*, 1.26.9).

gentesimo ab urbe condita anno and resulted from the restitution of the standards lost at Carrhae.¹⁸ These precisions help to interpret the text of Ammianus who, expresses himself in extremely vague terms at this point. About Rome's *iuventus* Ammianus tells us only that it was a period of military successes all over the world, without giving an indication when the next phase set in. Indeed, he further blurs the distinction between maturity and old age by the words *iamque vergens in senium*, which can be taken to refer to the last part of adulthood or the beginning of old age.

The transition to old age

Ammianus is not the only author who seems to hesitate on the threshold of old age. Seneca introduces a *prima senectus*, characterised by civil strife as a consequence of the unbridled growth of Rome (Lact. 7.15.14): *haec fuit prima eius senectus, cum bellis lacerata civilibus et intestino malo pressa rursus ad regimen singularis imperii reccidit*. This summarizes the period between the Gracchi in 133 and the principate of Augustus. 'Vopiscus' takes the outbreak of the Social Wars (in 91) as the beginning of a time during which Rome *usque ad Augustum bellis adfecta civilibus consenuit*. Florus is of the opinion that the first hundred years of Rome's *iuventus* was a golden age, whereas the hundred years between the capture of Carthage, Corinth and Numantia and the reign of Augustus were miserable and shameful. Ammianus must have had the same period of transition in mind when he describes Rome as *vergens in senium*, but in contrast to the negative judgment of that period in the other authors, Ammianus is silent about the social and civil wars and only calls attention to Rome's greatness, which permitted her to win victories without a battle: *nomine solo aliquotiens vincens*. Strangely enough, the phrase has never been commented upon, but it does contain a clue to the precise date Ammianus was thinking of. It is a generalized (*aliquotiens*) reference to the negotiated peace between Rome and the Parthians in the year 20, of which Augustus was so proud that he had the transfer of the standards depicted on the cuirass of the Prima Porta statue.¹⁹ This means that the sentence has been misinterpreted

¹⁸ The restitution of the *signa Crassiana* is the last historical event mentioned by Florus in 4.12.63, after which there reigned universal peace: *ubique certa et continua totius generis humani aut pax fuit aut pactio*.

¹⁹ Dio 54.8.2 καὶ γὰρ ἐφρόνει μέγα, λέγων ὅτι τὰ πρότερόν ποτε ἐν ταῖς μάχαις

both by Matthews and by Barnes. The former failed to take *solo* into account and took *aliquotiens* literally. For those reasons, he took it to refer to the emperors in general.²⁰ The latter saw that it belonged to 'the late prime of the Roman people', but did not identify it with the treaty with the Parthians. Therefore he took it to refer to the time before the principate.²¹ The idea must have been suggested to Ammianus by Florus' reference to the *signa Crassiana* quoted above.²² As this is the last major event mentioned by Florus before universal peace was established, we may conclude that in Ammianus' view the *senectus* proper set in after the consolidation of Augustus' monarchy.

Senium imperii

Ammianus uses the phrase *ad tranquilliora vitae discessit* for Rome's reaching old age. Since it is relevant for interpreting the colours in which he depicts old age, it will be useful to look at the antecedents of the expression. Cicero opposed *tranquillitas vitae* to the troubled life of a politician in *Mur.* 55 *qui remoti a studiis ambitionis otium ac tranquillitatem vitae secuti sunt*. We find the same opposition in Tac. *Ann.* 4.40.6 about people like Proculeius *insigni tranquillitate vitae, nullis rei publicae negotiis permixtos*. In Ammianus' own time Ausonius congratulates an old professor from Bordeaux on his peaceful retirement in Cahors: *placidos mores tranquillaque vitae / tempora praedives finisti sede Cadurca* (*Prof. Burd.* 17.14). The examples show that the phrase has a positive ring. Ammianus is the only author to use *tranquilliora vitae*, in the passage under discussion and in 25.5.4 about the father of Jovian, *Varroniani notissimi comitis filius haud dudum post depositum militiae munus ad tranquilliora vitae digressi*.²³

Before discussing Ammianus' overall picture of the *senium imperii*, two details deserve attention. Ammianus tells us that, after taming the

ἀπολόμενα ἀκονιτὶ ἐκεκόμιστο.

²⁰ Matthews 1986, 22: 'it is through their (the emperors') efforts in conducting wars in the name of Rome ... that Rome will live – or conquer: *victura* – as long as there are men'.

²¹ Barnes 1998, 173 n. 35: 'before it (i.e. the Roman people, dH) ceded control to the emperors'.

²² Also in Vergil and Horace the two events are mentioned in one breath: A. 7.606-7 *Parthosque reposcere signa / sunt geminae Belli portae*; *Carm.* 4.15.6-9 *derepta Parthorum superbis / postibus, et vacuum duellis / Ianum Quirini clausit*. See also Suet. *Aug.* 21.3-22.1

²³ I fail to understand how Barnes (173 n. 29) can interpret the words as referring to Varronianus' death (the word *vitae* simply precludes this). Maybe he was led astray by taking

barbarians (*post superbas effertarum gentium cervices oppressas*), Rome has brought justice to the world through its laws (*latasque leges fundamenta libertatis et retinacula sempiterna*). In itself, this is a time-worn topic in the *laudes Romae*, for which Gernentz's basic study (1918, 129–37) offers a large number of parallels, i.a. from contemporaries or near contemporaries of Ammianus like Claudianus, Prudentius and Rutilius Namatianus. What is remarkable is the metaphor of the law as anchor of freedom, for which I know no parallel in Latin literature. In all probability this metaphor, too, stems from *De fortuna Romanorum*. In 316F–317A Plutarch writes about the cooperation of Virtue and Fortune in the foundation of Rome: Time joined them together that he might construct for all mankind ἐστίαν ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ ἀνησιδώραν καὶ πεῖσμα μόνινον.²⁴ Here Rome is a centre of stability in a restless world, a metaphor used again by Ammianus in 16.10.13 *Romam ... imperii virtutumque omnium larem*.

Another noteworthy aspect in the passage on Rome's *senium* is the idea of the Caesars as the heirs of Rome. At first reading this sounds familiar. Indeed, in his RE-article 'Princeps' Wickert (1954, 2105) speaks of a *hereditas*-topos. He defines it, however, negatively as follows: 'Reich und Herrschaft sollen nicht wie ein Privateigentum vererbt werden'. The *locus classicus* for this topos is Galba's speech on the adoption of Piso in Tac. *Hist.* 1.16.1 *sub Tiberio et Gaio et Claudio unius familiae quasi hereditas fuimus: loco libertatis erit quod eligi coepimus*.²⁵ It is a recurring theme in the contemporary *Historia Augusta*. To quote just one example, Quintillus, the brother of Claudius II Gothicus succeeded him: *delatum sibi omnium iudicio suscepit imperium, non hereditarium, sed merito virtutum* (Cl. 12.3). As these examples show, the *hereditas*-topos has its place in discussions about the superiority of succession by adoption over hereditary succession. Ammianus has cleverly taken the sting out of it by substituting the Roman people for the imperial family as testator of the Empire.

In order to judge Ammianus' view of the *senium imperii*, we first have to look again at the different ways in which the authors who used

haud dudum with *post depositum militiae munus* instead of with *digressi*. The interpretation is part of his reading of the *Lebensaltervergleich* in Ammianus as a pessimistic view on Roman history.

²⁴ 'a Hearth, in truth both holy and beneficent, a steadfast cable', translation Babbitt.

²⁵ More explicit is Plin. *Pan.* 7.6, also quoted by Wickert: *imperatorum omnibus eligi debet ex omnibus; non enim serviolis tuis dominum, ut possis esse contentus quasi necessario herede, sed principem civibus daturus et imperatorem* e.q.s.

the comparison portrayed the old age of Rome. Lactantius is the only one to draw the logical conclusion. At the end of his quotation from Seneca he writes (7.15.17): *quodsi haec ita sunt, quid restat nisi ut sequatur interitus senectutem?* And he proceeds by saying that this is exactly what has been predicted, obscurely by the prophets, openly by the Sibyls. None of the others have dared to face this evitable consequence. Seneca had presented the old age of Rome as a return to childhood and compared the reign of the emperors with that of the kings, during which the Roman people fell back into the slavery from which it had liberated itself after king Tarquin. Although the renewed childhood is not presented as a fresh start and a sign of strength, Seneca still manages to keep imminent death at bay by introducing Rome's *altera infantia*. Florus gives another twist to the *Lebensaltervergleich*. In his version the emperor Trajan gave a new lease of life to the decaying empire: *a Caesare Augusto in saeculum nostrum haud multo minus anni ducenti, quibus inertia Caesarum quasi consenuit atque decoxit, nisi quod sub Traiano principe movit lacertos et praeter spem omnium senectus imperii quasi reddita iuventute revirescit* (Pr. 8).

Ammianus seems blissfully unaware of the problem inherent in the comparison. He simply portrays Rome as a wise and rich golden ager (to use the wonderful Australian expression for a pensioner), who has withdrawn from the pressure of work and entrusted to her sons, the Caesars, the guardianship of her possessions:²⁶ *urbs venerabilis ... velut frugi parens et prudens et dives Caesaribus tamquam liberis suis regenda patrimonii iura permittit*. Ammianus gives no indication whatsoever that this pleasant state of affairs is ever going to end. This is undeniably a highly surprising and unrealistic conclusion to a comparison with the stages of human life. Moreover, the rosy picture of the venerable Lady Rome as the universally respected centre of the world is in stark contrast to the actual situation in which the empire found itself after the defeat at Adrianople. How is this contrast between the optimistic picture and the grim reality as we know it from Ammianus' own work to be explained? According to Barnes (1998, 174) Ammianus' version of the comparison is only seemingly optimistic. In his view Ammianus' departure from his model Florus, who believed in a rejuvenation of the empire, is revealing and betrays that Ammianus rejects the easy confi-

²⁶ I use the feminine form, because Ammianus has the well-known personification of Rome as an old lady in mind, as is evident from the words *ut domna suscipitur et regina* in section 6.

dence of his predecessor. I find this difficult to accept. The obvious reason why Ammianus departed from Florus' version is that to him Trajan belonged to ancient history. Nor was there, after the disastrous end of Julian's Persian campaign, any emperor in recent history he could substitute for Trajan. What is more important, it seems utterly impossible to give a negative interpretation to the phrase with which Ammianus ends the comparison (§ 6): *per omnes tamen quot orae sunt partesque terrarum, ut domna suscipitur et regina et ubique patrum reverenda cum auctoritate canities populique Romani nomen circumspectum et verecundum*. In my opinion we must accept that there is a discrepancy between Ammianus' version of the *Lebensaltervergleich* and his own narrative of contemporary history. The discrepancy may be explained as the consequence of his stubborn belief *à tort et à travers* in the eternity of Rome,²⁷ or he may have failed to integrate this digression properly into the fabric of his work as a whole and have used his brightest colours to enhance the contrast with the description of contemporary Roman *mores* that follows.²⁸

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²⁷ A belief shared by most of his contemporaries, as is evident e.g. from the *laudes Romae* in authors like Claudian and Rutilius Namatianus.

²⁸ Cf. Ensslin 1923, 27: 'Auch darf man vielleicht annehmen, dass diese leuchtenden Farben den Gegensatz zu den mancherlei Auswüchsen im Leben und Treiben der Stadtrömer verschärfen sollten'.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

MANTUANUS VATES EXCELSUS

Vergil in the Res gestae of Ammianus Marcellinus

The title of this article is taken from the last great historian writing in Latin, Ammianus Marcellinus, who with these words refers to Vergil at a pivotal point in his *Res gestae*. As is well known, Ammianus calls himself in the concluding section of his work *miles quondam et Graecus*,¹ from which we may conclude that Latin is not his first language and that in all probability he had to learn it as a prerequisite for his distinguished military career as a *protector domesticus*. According to Eduard Norden (1958⁵, 648), who admitted that he had read only a small portion of the *Res gestae*, Ammianus' knowledge of Latin and Latin literature was superficial, a thin veneer over a solid Greek base. Very few scholars today accept this verdict; most would agree that Ammianus knew the language and literature as thoroughly as his contemporary Claudian, also from the East, whose command of the idiom of Latin epic is beyond dispute. A study of Vergil's presence in Ammianus may help to shed light on his cultural background.

It can be stated right at the outset that Ammianus' work is full of echoes from Vergil. I use the vague term 'echoes' deliberately, since not every reminiscence of Vergil must be considered a conscious allusion to the poet. Borrowings from epic poetry belong to the regular *ornatus* of Latin historiography. This applies to Sallust, Livy and Tacitus. For Tacitus especially, Vergil's work was a stylistic gold-mine. As Ammianus made a careful study of these predecessors, we may presuppose a stylistic basis in which Vergil plays a prominent role. In many cases, Ammianus may well have been unaware that a word or phrase he used had its origin in Vergil. With this *caveat* I would like to refer to a slightly simplified graph taken from the recent study of Foucher,² who has studied the impact of Latin poetry on historiography:

¹ 31.16.9 *haec ut miles quondam et Graecus a principatu Caesaris Nervae exorsus ad usque Valentis interitum pro virium explicavi mensura*.

² Foucher 2000, 258. The earlier studies by Hagendahl (1921) and Bitter (1976) are still very useful.

	SALLUSTIUS	LIVIOUS	CURTIUS RUFUS	TACITUS	AMMIANUS
<i>Lemmata</i>	13	56	32	92	142
<i>Occurrences</i>	21	233	125	280	742

As the table shows, both the number of the lemmata taken from Vergil and the frequency of their occurrences is greater in Ammianus than in any other historian.

Foucher gives us the number of the Vergilian echoes in Ammianus. At least as remarkable is their variety. It is well known from the studies of Comparetti, Hoogma and Courcelle that some passages, mainly from Books 1 and 6, are quoted very often, whereas other scenes from the *Aeneid* are hardly ever found. Ammianus has quotations from all books of the *Aeneid* and also appears to have read, or at least consulted, the *Bucolics* and the *Georgics*. This provides a flattering contrast to the contemporaneous *Historia Augusta*, in which the 'Heldenschau' of Book 6 is quoted time and again, whereas the rest of the *Aeneid* is practically left aside (see chapter 13 of this book).

I have made my own list of those Vergilian echoes in Ammianus which I take to be conscious allusions to the poet and are not found in earlier historians. For this twofold reason the list is shorter than that of Foucher, but still considerable, some eighty items. Most of them are from Books 20-25; the list is certainly not exhaustive.

So much about the number and the variety of the quotations. How did Ammianus distribute them over his work? Do the quotations fit their context and, finally, did he have any ulterior aim in inserting them apart from stylistic embellishment? There is a marked increase in the number of quotations in battle-scenes and siege-descriptions, in comparisons and in passage dealing with the central character Julian. Take for example the siege of Maozamalcha, 24.2.17: *obumbrata caeli facie fragmentis montium et missilibus*,³ which is obviously taken from A. 9.569: *ingenti fragmine montis*, or the description of the mail-clad Persian horsemen 24.4.15: *hostem undique lamminis ferreis in modum tenuis plumae contectum*,⁴ for which Ammianus had found the model in A. 11.770-1: *quem pellis aenis / in plumam squamis auro conserta tegebat*.

Among the most dramatic scenes in the *Res gestae* is the description of the battle of Strasbourg. Ammianus adds to the pathos of the men

³ 'when the face of heaven was darkened by fragments torn from mountains and other missiles'. The translations are taken, with minor modifications, from W. Hamilton 1986.

⁴ 'the enemy protected themselves by coats of mail; the plates of this were like the thin feathers of a bird'.

dying on the battle field and shows a morbid interest in the horrible details of their death, 16.12.53: *alii ... lucis usuram* (Cic. Ver. 5.75) *oculis morientibus inquirebant, quorundam capita discissa trabalibus telis et pendentia iugulis cohaerebant*,⁵ Here Ammianus cleverly combines two passages, A. 12.294-5: *teloque orantem multa trabali / desuper altus equo graviter ferit*, and 9.654-5: *atque illi partibus aequis / huc caput atque illuc umeroque ex utroque pependit*.

Occasionally the discovery that an expression in Ammianus is based on Vergil helps to establish the text. Constantia, the wife of the Caesar Gallus, is described by Ammianus as a Fury in mortal form. During court proceedings she regularly interferes, 14.9.3: *stimulis reginae exsertantis ora subinde per aulaeum*.⁶ This is reminiscent of the queen mother Agrippina in Tacitus, but Ammianus' model certainly was A. 3.425, where the same expression is used of the monster Scylla *ora exertantem*. Now V, the only manuscript that matters, reads *exertantis aura*, and Gelenius introduced the 'Verschlimbesserung' *exertantis aurem*. Once Ammianus' model had been discovered the correct orthography *ora* could be restored with certainty.

It has often been noticed that Ammianus likes to compare his characters to animals, fierce and unpleasant animals at that. The emperor Valentinian, enraged because his German opponent Macrianus has escaped him, is compared to a lion, 29.4.7: *tamquam leo ob cervum amisum vel capream morsus vacuos concrepans*.⁷ Here again, Ammianus cleverly combines two comparisons in the *Aeneid* about a hunting lion and dog, A. 10.725: *(leo) conspexit capream aut surgentem in cornua cervum*, and 12.755: *(canis) increpuit malis morsuque elusus inani est*.

In my opinion these allusions to Vergil are a real embellishment of the historical text. It must be admitted, however, that on occasion the quotations fit their contexts less well. Take for instance the following example. In his final judgement on the emperor Constantius, who as an opponent of Julian is in Ammianus' bad books, the historian tells us that Constantius was unsuccessful against foreign enemies, but always victorious in civil wars. He formulates this as follows, 21.16.15: *intestinis ulceribus rei publicae sanie perfusus horrenda*.⁸ In Vergil A. 2.221-2: *perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno / clamores simul horrendos ad sidera*

⁵ 'others ... sought to catch a last glimpse of the light with their dying eyes. Some had their heads severed by pikes as massive as beams, so that they hung merely by the throat'.

⁶ 'the queen who from time to time thrust out her face from behind a curtain'.

⁷ 'clapping his jaws in vain after a deer or a roe that has escaped him'.

⁸ 'he bathed in the blood which poured in a fearful stream from the internal wounds of

tollit, these words are quite appropriate for Laocoon in his desperate fight against the two serpents. In the characterisation of Constantius, however, the style degenerates into Grand Guignol.

In general, however, it may be said that Ammianus uses Vergil in a creative manner, combining separate passages and expressions in a way that demonstrates his profound knowledge of Vergil's text and is hardly ever pedantic. Two more texts may demonstrate his art in combining separate expressions into a new and striking phrase. In the course of the expedition against Persia, Julian decides literally to burn his ships behind him, 24.7.4: *ut tamquam funesta face Bellonae subiectis ignibus exuri cunctas iusserat naves*.⁹ The phrase *tamquam fatali face Bellonae* is made up from elements in four lines in A. 7.319-22: *et Bellona manet te pronuba. nec face tantum / ... / funestaeque iterum ... taedae*. The next example demonstrates that Vergil must have been constantly in Ammianus' mind. In his long digression on Persia, Ammianus has reached Bactria, a country that is watered, he says, by many rivers, just like Italy, 23.6.55-7: *proximos his limites possident Bactriani ... et ad Italiae speciem crebris fluminibus inundantur*. Why this sudden and unparalleled comparison with Italy? Because the historian is thinking of Vergil's *laus Italiae* in *Georgics* 2, with the wonderful line *fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros* (2.157). The *laus Italiae* contains the proud assertion (2.136-8) *sed neque Medorum silvae ... laudibus Italiae certent nec Bactra neque Indi*, and that, I would suggest, has prompted the unexpected comparison with Italy.

Finally, the passages on Julian. When he enters the stage as Caesar in Gaul, Ammianus announces his future role with the opening sentence, 15.9.1: *proinde quoniam – ut Mantuanus vates praedixit excelsus – opus moveo maius maiorque mihi rerum nascitur ordo*.¹⁰ Ammianus could not have been more explicit in giving Julian the status of an epic hero. At the end of Julian's life, in his final judgement on his favourite, Ammianus calls him again *vir profecto heroicis connumerandus ingeniis* (25.4.1). The same tendency is visible in the narration of Julian's burial in Tarsus near the river Cydnus. Libanius in his *laudatio funebris* on Julian had said that the emperor should have been buried in the Academy in Athens next to Plato's grave (Lib. Or. 18.306). There can be no doubt that

the state'.

⁹ 'one would believe that Bellona herself must have lit the fatal flame when he gave orders that all the ships should be burnt'.

¹⁰ 'now, since, in the words of the sublime poet of Mantua, "I am undertaking a grander task, and a greater theme opens before me"'.

Ammianus had read the speech. He gave it his personal twist, transposing the scene from Athens to Rome, 25.10.5: *cuius suprema et cineres, si qui tunc iuste consuleret, non Cydnus videre deberet, quamvis gratissimus amnis et liquidus, sed ad perpetuandam gloriam recte factorum praeterlabere Tiberis intersecans urbem aeternam divorumque veterum monumenta praestringens*.¹¹ Here we can almost follow Ammianus at his writing desk. The words *gratissimus amnis* evoke the Tiber by association with A. 8.63-4: *ego sum pleno quem flumine cernis / stringentem ripas et pingua culta secantem / caeruleus Thybris, caelo gratissimus amnis*. In Aeneid 6 Vergil prophesies that the Tiber will flow along the grave of Marcellus, 6.873-4: *vel quae, Tiberine, videbis funera, cum tumulum praeterlabere recentem*.¹² Now Ammianus puts his message across: Julian should have been buried, not next to the grave of Plato, but in the mausoleum of Hadrian, next to his revered predecessor Marcus Aurelius.

These quotations also have an ideological function. Ammianus shares the reverence for the *vates excelsus* as the symbol of the Roman tradition, as we find it for example in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, a tradition that was threatened in his days both by the decline of Rome as the capital of the Empire and by the rise of Christianity. Ammianus turns to Vergil to assign to the pagan emperor Julian his rightful place in Roman history and to make him acceptable to the public for which he was writing, the senatorial aristocracy of Rome.

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¹¹ 'if proper consideration had been given to the matter Julian's ashes should not lie within sight of the Cydnus, beautiful and limpid though it is. To perpetuate the memory of his exploits they should have been laid where they might be lapped by the Tiber which intersects the Eternal City and skirts the monuments of earlier deified emperors'.

¹² The comparison shows that Valesius' *praeterlabere* should be rejected in favour of *praeterlabere*.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

LITERARY ASPECTS OF AMMIANUS' SECOND DIGRESSION ON ROME

1. *Rome in the 'Post-Julianic' Books*

In books 26–31, which deal with the years after Julian's death, Ammianus writes more frequently and at greater length about Rome than in books 15–25, where Julian, as Caesar and Augustus, is the centre of attention. The only substantial Roman episodes in these books are Leonтий's urban prefecture in 15.7 and Constantius' visit to Rome in 16.10.¹ In book 19 one short chapter is devoted to the prefecture of Tertullus; the prefects Artemius and Maximus are mentioned only in passing in books 17 and 21.² In the 'post-Julianic' books on the other hand, we find extensive accounts of the prefectures of Apronianus, Symmachus, Lampadius, Viventius, and Praetextatus in books 26 and 27.³ The explanation for this increased attention is probably that Ammianus, while writing about the Persian campaign, wanted to concentrate exclusively on Julian's exploits, whereas the dispersed activities of Valentinian and Valens gave him ample opportunity to interrupt his account of their deeds at regular intervals.

The focus on Rome is most pronounced in book 28, in which no fewer than 20 of the 34 pages in the Teubner edition deal with events in the capital and with Roman life in general. The first chapter, one of the longest in the *Res gestae*, is an indictment against the hated Maximinus, vicar of the City and right-hand man of Valentinian, who instigated what amounts to a Great Purge among the Roman aristocracy. Chapter four is generally known as the second digression on Rome. It is longer and more detailed than the first digression in 14.6, but closely resembles it in tone and purpose. Both digressions have attracted scholarly attention for their brilliant thumbnail sketches of the Roman aristocrats and

¹ The first episode has become famous by the chapter 'The Arrest of Petrus Valvomeres' in Auerbach 1946.

² Tertullus: 19.10; Artemius: 17.11.5; Maximus: 21.12.24. For the passages on the urban prefects in Ammianus see Van de Wiel 1989.

³ Apronianus: 26.3; Symmachus, Lampadius, Viventius: 27.3; Praetextatus: 27.9.8–10.

plebeians and for the highly personal and outspoken manner in which Ammianus airs his frustrations as a *honestus advena* in the Eternal City.⁴ They have been studied primarily as sources for the lifestyle of the senators in Late Antiquity, as is evident from the titles of some recent studies, in which the digressions are pillaged for information on this subject.⁵ In this article I will discuss some aspects of the second digression from a literary perspective, both internally as regards its place within the *Res gestae* and externally with regard to the genre of writing, its possible models and the literary context of Ammianus' own time.

2. *The two digressions: similarities and differences*

Apart from the Roman digressions in 14.6 and 28.4 there must have been at least one digression on Rome in the lost books, as is evident from Ammianus' statement in 28.4.6: *et primo nobilitatis, ut aliquotiens pro locorum copia fecimus, dein plebis digeremus errata*.⁶ In this respect the urban digressions are not unique. Ammianus also wrote more than one digression on the Saracens and on Egypt.⁷ For a catchword survey of the contents of the two preserved digressions the reader is referred to the Appendix.

Both passages start with a sketch of the *praefectus urbi* and the popular unrest he had to face on account of a shortage of wine and measures taken by him against gluttony. This sets the tone for the digressions in which only negative characteristics of the *nobiles* and the *plebs* are enumerated.⁸ The author is clearly embarrassed by the trivial nature of the

⁴ Important studies on the digressions are Pack 1953; Demandt 1965; Drexler 1974, 27-38; Kohns 1975; Van de Wiel 1989, 18-28, 185-228; Matthews 1989, 214-5, 414-6, and the books quoted in the next note.

⁵ Näf 1995; Schlinkert 1996; Niquet 2000.

⁶ As the *divisio* between *nobilitas* and *plebs* shows, this cannot refer in general to passages on Rome, for instance as part of the chapters on the urban prefectures, because in those chapters such a *divisio* is never found.

⁷ 14.4.2: *super quorum* (the Saracens) *moribus licet in actibus principis Marci et postea aliquotiens memini rettulisse, tamen nunc quoque pauca de isdem expediam carptim*; 22.15.1: *strictim ... res Aegyptiacae tangantur, quarum notitiam in actibus Hadriani et Severi principum digessimus late*.

⁸ In 28.4.5 Ammianus uses the strong expression *tanta ... labes insanabilium flagitiorum*. At the beginning of the first digression, in 14.6.7, he blames *levitas paucorum incondita*, 'the disorderly frivolity of a few', for Rome's stained reputation, but he does not repeat this restriction in the course of the digression proper. In the second digression it is lacking altogether. The translations in this article are taken from Hamilton 1986.

information he is going to present. It is undeniably far below the level required of history, which 'usually deals with prominent events' (*discurrere per negotiorum celsitudines assuetae*, 26.1.1). In 14.6 the *Lebensaltervergleich*, describing in an elevated style Rome's rise to greatness, serves to emphasize the contrast between Rome's position in the world and the unworthy behaviour of its inhabitants.

The actual description of Roman life and manners is introduced in both digressions by a *divisio*: first the *nobilitas*, then the *plebs*. In both digressions the emphasis is heavily on the *nobilitas*. The *plebs* receives only perfunctory attention in 14.6.25-6 and a somewhat more elaborate treatment in 28.4.28-34. Unlike the aristocrats, ordinary people obviously have no standards to live up to.

The defect of the aristocracy that seems to have irritated Ammianus most is their superficiality. They do not care for glory based on merit, but only for the outward symbols of it, such as statues. Closely related to this superficiality is their total indifference to literary culture or *Bildung*. They shrink from anything that demands intellectual effort and spend their time and money on vulgar pastimes such as concerts, theatre and dance. Secondly, the ostentation of riches is censured at great length. The aristocrats try to create an impression with their troops of clients, servants and slaves following them wherever they go. They show off their riches by wearing outrageously expensive garments and by building extravagant palaces.

Next comes their arrogance, which betrays itself in their disdain for people born outside the *pomerium* and in the unreasonable demands they make on their clients. They themselves are totally unmanly in their lack of endurance. In their obsessive fear of contagion they do not dare to visit their sick friends. In some respects, such as their fascination for gambling and the races, they are no better than the plebeians.

The 'lowest class of the poor people' (*turba imae sortis et paupertinae*), as Ammianus chooses to call the *plebs* in 14.6.25, seems to be beneath contempt, living as they do exclusively for food, drink, and vulgar amusements. These are the common elements in both digressions. The vignettes depicting these vices may be different, but the substance and purport of the diatribes are identical. The second digression lacks a lofty introduction like the *Lebensaltervergleich* of 14.6, but for the modern reader this is compensated for by some very interesting new elements, such as the excessive pride in family names felt by aristocrats as well as plebeians, the pulp authors read by the aristocracy (Juvenal and Marius Maximus), their addiction to astrology, and the way they behave in fi-

nancial matters such as loans, debts, and wills. All in all it seems justified to characterize the two digressions as variations on a set of themes, different in execution and emphasis, but similar in tone and substance.

3. *The views of Hartke and Matthews*

Attempts have been made to point out differences between the two digressions. In his *Römische Kinderkaiser*, Hartke (1951, 62-75) sees a development in Ammianus' descriptions of Rome under the influence of historical events witnessed by the author, more specifically the impact of the pretender Eugenius in 394. He characterizes the first digression as 'eine kühl berichtende Darstellung aus der Kultur- und Sittengeschichte der Stadt'. In it we see only the author himself, not the Roman public, which has completely lost sight of its glorious past. In the second digression on the other hand, the public is, according to Hartke, directly addressed in the second person singular. Both nobility and *plebs* are shown in action. They are aware of the obligations their family names impose upon them, but their behaviour is no more than an empty masquerade in historical costumes. Hartke concludes: 'Angesichts derartig grundlegender Unterschiede ist es eigentlich erstaunlich, dass man überhaupt jene beiden Exkurse zu einer Gesamtschau vereinigte. Man hätte bedenken sollen, dass jener im 14. Buch, dieser im 28. Buch steht und zwischen der Abfassung der beiden Bücher ein nicht unbeträchtlicher Zeitraum gelegen haben muss. In dieser Zeit war aber allerhand Weltbewegendes passiert, und Ammian wie Rom hatten sich geändert.' The concluding statement about the momentous changes during the period in which Ammianus wrote his history is plausible *per se*. The problem is, however, that the differences postulated by Hartke are, as far as I can see, not to be found in the text. The two pieces of evidence he adduces either are found in both digressions or are contestable. The first applies to the use of the second person singular, which is not confined to the second digression, as Hartke claims. More importantly, these should not be taken as a personal address, but represent a generalized use of the second person, which is a characteristic of the *Diatribenstil* in satirical writing.⁹ Hartke's interpretation of the prepositional

⁹ For the generalized use of the second person singular see Szantyr 1965, 419. Ammianus uses it also in the first digression: *at nunc si ad aliquem bene nummatum tumentemque ideo honestus advena salutatum introieris primitus, tamquam exoptatus suscipieris* e.q.s. (14.6.12). For the *Diatribenstil* see Schmidt 1966, 507-15.

phrase *ad imitationem* in 28.4.32 *ad imitationem Tauricae gentis peregrinos vociferantur* (sc. the Roman *plebs*) *pellī debere* as ‘intentional’ is strained, to say the least.¹⁰ It seems impossible, therefore, to subscribe to Hartke’s view that there are fundamental differences between the two digressions.

A different approach has been chosen by Matthews (1989, 414-6), who compares their structure and internal cohesion. On the basis of some perceptive observations he concludes i.a. that the first digression is ‘more thematic in its emphasis’ and that ‘its various topics are introduced with a greater variety and resource of language and style’. It cannot be denied that the vignettes in the second digression are shorter and very loosely connected, which gives the whole piece a somewhat rambling character, whereas the first digression is more coherent due to the repeated comparisons of the present with the idealized past, a theme introduced at the outset by the *Lebensaltervergleich*. I am afraid, however, that Matthews is overstating his case when he opposes the down-to-earth introduction in 28.4.4 (about Ampelius’ regulations concerning opening hours of *thermopolia* and the sale of hot water and meat) to the *Lebensaltervergleich* in 14.6 and reads this as a sign of different preoccupations on the part of the author, ideological in the first, merely descriptive in the second. As we have seen earlier, the starting-point of the two digressions is almost identical, since the immediate cause given by Ammianus for writing the first digression was also the unruly behaviour of the mob *ob inopiam vini, cuius avidis usibus vulgus intentum ad motus asperos incitatur et crebros* (14.6.1). Still, Matthews’ discussion of the digressions is very illuminating and his epigrammatic characterization of the two digressions as ‘less photographic archive than portfolio of cartoons’ is striking indeed. So much for the relation between the two digressions.

4. Qualities valued by Ammianus

Few readers will accept Ammianus’ picture of Roman society at face value. It is evidently a wilfully distorted and grossly exaggerated indictment of those aspects of Roman life and manners that had incurred Ammi-

¹⁰ Hartke 1972, 64: ‘Der Ausdruck *ad imitationem* ist viel dynamischer zu verstehen als ein blosses *ut* (4.9); dieses bedeutete einen formalen Vergleich, jenes enthält einen intentionalen Sinn.’ In classical prose this may indeed be the case, e.g. Cic. *Rep.* 2.79 *ut ad imitationem sui vocet alios*. In late Latin the intentional meaning seems to have disappeared; compare Macr. *Somn.* 1.5.9 *corpus solidum quod στερεόν vocant, qualis est tessera quae κύβος vocatur* and in the next section *corpus solidum quod στερεόν vocant ad imitationem tesserae quae κύβος vocatur*.

anus' displeasure. What it does reveal, – *e contrario*, one might say – are the human qualities Ammianus valued most. His strictures reveal a very serious person, an officer and a gentleman, formal, if not solemn, in the ways he expresses his opinions. He must have had a strong sense of self-esteem, judging from his indignation at the lack of respect with which he, a *honestus advena* (14.6.12) and *vetus in commilitio principis recens digressus* (28.4.20), was received in Rome. On his travels he had known the winters of northern Gaul and the summers of Mesopotamia and Egypt, which is why he scoffed at Roman dandies who thought themselves Alexanders and Caesars if they ventured outside the city walls, and complained of the heat when a ray of sun pierced their pretty parasols (28.4.18). In the army he had learned the importance of friendship and mutual trust in dangerous situations, which explains his contempt for people who make friends only at the gambling table (28.4.21), but for fear of contagion refuse to visit them when they are ill (14.6.23). For him, divination and astrology are matters of great importance when vital decisions have to be made, and therefore he is indignant about the consultation of horoscopes to decide when it is safe to go to the baths (28.4.24). Most appealing is his respect for *Bildung*, of which he had already given ample proof in his many learned digressions, and which he clearly regarded as an end in itself, as the anecdote about Socrates shows, who, while waiting for his execution, wanted to study Stesichorus *ut aliquod sciens amplius e vita discedat* (28.4.15). Norden, and many scholars after him, have sneered at this aspect of Ammianus' work. He called the digressions 'unsäglich banal und in ihrer gespreizten Schau-stellung von allerlei gelehrten- oder dilettantenhaftem Raritätenkram widerlich' (1958⁵, II, 647). It is my impression, however, that there is more at stake here than just an inclination to show off. Ammianus is defending and preserving the cultural heritage he cherishes and he is angry at the neglect of this heritage in Rome, *imperii virtutumque omnium lar* (16.10.13). When reading the digressions, and indeed the whole of the *Res gestae*, we must keep in mind that Ammianus was writing in the aftermath of the battle of Adrianople.¹¹ For an officer who had been in the company of the emperor for years and who had taken part in his campaigns in Gaul and Persia, who was, moreover, fully aware of the dangerous situation Rome was in after that grave defeat, Roman society must have been deeply disappointing. Were these the people the Roman armies were fighting to protect?

¹¹ *Ita turbido instantium studio orbis Romani perniciēs ducebatur* (31.4.6). For the impact of the battle at Adrianople see Straub 1943, 255–86, repr. in (1972) 195–219; Lenski 1997, 129–68.

5. *The relation between the digression and the account of the trials under Maximinus (28.1)*

The place where Ammianus inserted his second digression on Rome into the *Res gestae* poses a serious problem. It begins with the programmatic statement *Diu multumque a negotiis discussus urbanis adigente cumulo foris gestorum ad ea strictim exsequenda regrediar exorsus ab Olybrii praefectura*.¹² One might have expected such a statement in 26.3, where Ammianus resumes his series of reports on the urban prefecture after the long interruption in the Julianic books.¹³ Here it is separated only by two short chapters on *foris gesta*, in this case military activities in the provinces, from the exceptionally long chapter 28.1 with its account of the trials conducted in the City by the vicar Maximinus, which Ammianus had concluded with the words *is urbanarum rerum status, ut ita dixerim, fuit* (28.1.57).¹⁴ No less surprising is the fact that, although in both chapters Olybrius and Ampelius are mentioned in their function of *praefectus urbi*, there is no cross-reference whatsoever. In other words, the account of the trials in chapter one and the digression in chapter four on the aristocracy and the *plebs* of the City seem to belong to completely different worlds.¹⁵ It looks as if Ammianus has inserted either the account of the trials or the digression at a later time without bothering to make the necessary adjustments.¹⁶ It may be relevant in this context that the author tells us himself, at the outset of 28.1, about his reluctance to present a detailed account of the persecution of the Senate by Maximinus: *ac licet ab hoc textu cruento gestorum exquisite narrando iustus me retraheret metus* (28.1.2). Could it be that Ammianus had initially shied away from a description of Maximinus' reign of terror, but later overcame his fear, *praesentis temporis modestia fretus* (28.1.2) and inserted that painful account? And did he purposely transfer the blame from the urban prefects Olybrius and Ampelius to Valen-

¹² The reading *discussus* (Gelenius) is dubious, since no parallel for this use of *discutere* can be found in Ammianus, or, for that matter, in the *ThLL*. *Digressus* (A) would suit the context much better; cf. 20.11.30: *narratione redire, unde digressa est, festinante*.

¹³ The last short reference to the urban prefecture had been 21.12.24 (Maximus).

¹⁴ It will not do to distinguish *negotia urbana* as referring to Roman affairs in general from *res Romanae* in the sense of 'trials in Rome', since Ammianus ends the digression with the words *Sit satis interim haec digessisse super rebus urbanis* (28.4.35).

¹⁵ Duly noted by Matthews 1989, 214-5. There is no note ad loc. in Marié 1984.

¹⁶ At the time of writing this paper I had not seen Lizzi Testa 2004, who writes on p. 20 'sembra quasi che Ammiano non avesse ancora scritto il racconto delle persecuzioni, o se ne fosse dimenticato.'

tinian's creature Maximinus, portraying the senators as victims of persecution rather than criminals receiving their due?¹⁷ A clear-cut answer cannot be hoped for, but it is obvious that the description of the trials in Rome under Maximinus caused Ammianus serious difficulties and that the final arrangement of book 28 with the two chapters on Roman matters following each other so closely is less than perfect.

6. *The satirical character of the digression*

After these considerations concerning the place of the second digression in the *Res gestae*, it is time to turn to questions of genre, models and literary context. The style of writing is called satirical by every critic who has studied the digressions. It is easy to see why. Ammianus' contemporary, the grammarian Diomedes, defined satire as follows: *carmen apud Romanos ... maledicum et ad carpenda hominum vitia ... compositum*;¹⁸ and, as Rudd (1985, ix) says, 'Above all else, Roman satire is about Roman life.' The digressions qualify on both counts, but there is much more. The satirist is by inclination conservative. Idealization of the past goes hand in hand with denunciation of the present. As in Roman verse satire, in Ammianus' digressions this leads to sharp contrasts and sarcastic comparisons, for instance in 28.4.21 between the sadness of a vulgar gambler, indignant because a *proconsularis* is given a better place at table, and the disappointment of M. Porcius Cato after his defeat for the praetorship. Satirists make their point by grotesque exaggerations and so does Ammianus. To mention just one of the numerous specimens of hyperbole I quote 28.4.19: after bathing, the rich man 'has his presses opened and makes a careful inspection of his shimmering

¹⁷ Ammianus dates the trials vaguely to *anno sextimo decimo et eo diutius post Nepotiani exitium* (28.1.1), instead of mentioning the urban prefects, as he does in 26.3.1-2, 27.3.11-3, and 27.9.9. The reference to the massacre under Nepotianus in 350 (*cuius stolidum ingenium adeo plebi Romanae patribusque exitio fuit, uti passim domus, fora, viae templaque cruore aut cadaveribus opplerentur bustorum modo* (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 42.7)) sets the tone for what is to follow and diverts the attention from the urban prefects in office at the time. See on the chronological problems involved Barnes 1998, 233-4. Note also that in 28.1.15 Ammianus defends himself against possible criticisms of his chronology in terms that are reminiscent of his programmatic statement at the beginning of book 26: *Et quoniam existimo forsitan aliquos haec lecturos exquisitè scrutando notare strepentes id actum prius esse, non illud* e.q.s.

¹⁸ For a discussion of this *locus classicus* see Van Rooy 1965, 1-29. An excellent introduction is Braund 1992. Still useful from a literary point of view is Anderson 1982. An important relativization of the concept of the *Persona*, introduced by Anderson into the study of Roman satire, is Mayer 2003, 55-80. For an overview of themes in satire see Rudd 1985.

robes, of which he has brought enough with him *to dress eleven people*.¹⁹ Perhaps the most striking characteristic of satire is the pursuit of *ἐναργεία* or *evidentia*, vividness of presentation by minutely detailed description. Ammianus is especially good at this. I will give three examples. In the first digression we find this description of women dancers, brilliantly translated by Hamilton: 'Wherever you turn your eyes you can see any number of women with curled ringlets, old enough, if they were married, to be mothers of three, skimming the floor with their feet to the point of exhaustion and launching themselves into the bird-like evolutions by which they represent the countless scenes which form the imaginary content of theatrical pieces' (14.6.20).²⁰ Equally unforgettable is the picture of the arrogant noblemen who avert their face to avoid being kissed: 'they turn their head to one side like a bad-tempered bull ... and offer their knee or hand instead' (28.4.10).²¹ If they stoop to ask a *peregrinus* where he is living or where he takes his baths, 'they believe that a stranger is given an abundance of all the duties of courtesy' (28.4.10; tr. Rolfe).²² The aristocrats are so proud of the magnificent fish and dormice they offer their guests that 'they bore them to death by repeated expressions of wonder at the unheard-of size of the creatures, especially when *some thirty secretaries* are in attendance with writing-cases and notebooks to take down the statistics, and *all that is wanting to complete the appearance of a school is the schoolmaster*' (28.4.13).²³

The similarities to satirical writing can also be observed in the microstructure of the digressions. As a rule, a satire is not a well-ordered piece of reasoning, but rather a series of vignettes with a maximum of visual impact. The same applies to Ammianus' digressions. Especially in the second we find a string of short sketches introduced by words like *plerique*, *aliqui*, *quidam*, *alii*, *sunt qui*, *pauci*, *pars eorum* etc. The

¹⁹ ... solutis pressoriis vestes luce nitentes ambigua diligenter explorat, quae una portantur, sufficientes ad induendos homines undecim.

²⁰ ... et licet, quocumque oculos flexeris, feminas affatim multas spectare cirratas, quibus, si nupsissent, per aetatem ter iam nixus poterat suppetere liberorum, ad usque taedium pedibus pavimenta tergentes iactari volucriter gyris, dum exprimunt innumera simulacra, quae finxere fabulae theatrales.

²¹ 28.4.10: ex his quidam, cum salutari pectoribus oppositis coeperint, osculanda capita in modum taurorum minacium obliquantes adulatoribus offerunt genua savianda vel manus.

²² ... abundare omni cultu humanitatis peregrinum putantes. The last phrase is strangely misinterpreted by Seager (1986, 20), who gives the following comment: 'Ammianus castigates those who are so arrogant as to think it (i.e. *humanitas*) unroman'.

²³ quorum magnitudo saepius replicata non sine taedio praesentium ut antehac inusitata laudatur assidue maxime, cum haec eadem numerantes notarii triginta prope assistant cum thecis et pugillaribus tabulis, ut deesse solus magister ludi litterarii videretur.

frequent use of the generalized second person is another stylistic feature that the digressions have in common with Roman verse satire.²⁴

7. *The element of distortion and the catalogues of names*

Satire has been defined as 'the playfully critical distortion of the familiar' (Feinberg 1963, 7). One hesitates whether playfulness is the right word in speaking about Ammianus' sketches, but distortion certainly is. As Braund (1992, 4) remarks, satirical works can be plotted upon the graph created by the scales of playfulness and criticism. In Ammianus the element of criticism is markedly stronger than that of playfulness. His digressions are serious and moralistic in intent, in accordance with the overall purport of his work. Nevertheless distortion is certainly part of them. I am afraid this has not been taken sufficiently into account by some who have studied the most interesting new element in the second digression, namely the lists of aristocratic and plebeian family names in 28.4.7 and 28.4.28. The former list has suffered badly in the transmission of the text, as the apparatus in the Teubner edition makes clear (Niquet 2000, 113-5). Seyfarth, following the Fuldensis, reads: *prae-nominum claritudine conspicui quidam, ut putant, in immensum semet extollunt, cum Reburri et Flavonii et Pagonii Gereonesque appellantur ac Dalii cum Tarraciis et Ferasiis aliisque ita decens sonantibus originum insignibus multis*.²⁵ The only well-known name in this series is *Tarracius*.²⁶ In the text of Gelenius we find *Flabianii* instead of *Flavonii*. Niquet rightly insists that we should take Gelenius' text seriously, because it may well represent the text of the Hersfeldensis, from which the Fuldensis is derived, so she plausibly proposes to accept *Flabiani* and identify them with the illustrious Flaviani. If this is right, we have two well-known names from the Roman aristocracy at the end of the fourth century. For Anthony Birley (1995) this was not enough. On the basis of Ammianus' text he produced the following list by 'desperate and palaeographically implausible remedies', as he himself admits on p. 59: *cum <P>robi et Faltonii et Ragonii Ceionii que appellantur Albinii cum Pam-*

²⁴ For the stylistic characteristics of Juvenal in particular De Decker 1913 is still indispensable.

²⁵ There is an intriguing similarity between Hier. *Ep.* 107.2 (about a relative of the addressee Laeta, who had been urban prefect): *propinquus vester Gracchus, nobilitatem patriciam nomine sonans* and Ammianus' *aliisque ita decens sonantibus originum insignibus multis*.

²⁶ For instance in 28.1.27 we find *Tarracius Bassus, postea urbi praefectus*.

machiis et Vitrasiiis ... que. Now we have a veritable Roman Debrett. In my opinion this suggestion is best soon forgotten, not just for palaeographical reasons, but above all because a satirical digression is the wrong place to look for a *bona fide* list of noble Roman families. Does Birley also take the plebeian names in 28.4.28 seriously? There we read about plebeians taking pride in the following *nomina culta*: *ut Messores, Statarii, Semicupae et Serapini et Cicymbricus cum Gluturino et Trulla et Lucanicus cum Porclaca et Salsula similesque innumeri*.²⁷ And moreover, Ammianus may not have treated Roman dignitaries with kid gloves,²⁸ but to attack by name so many leading families at the same time would be a different matter altogether.

8. Are there traces of Juvenal in the digression?

Up to this point I have managed with some difficulty not to mention the name of Juvenal, although one is constantly reminded of him when reading the digressions and despite the fact that he is mentioned by Ammianus himself along with the biographer Marius Maximus: *Iuvenalem et Marium Maximum curatiore studio legunt, nulla volumina praeter haec in profundo otio contrectantes, quam ob causam non iudicii est nostri*.²⁹ One wonders why the reference is so contemptuous,³⁰ seeing that both theme and tone of Ammianus' digressions have much

²⁷ Demandt (1965, 20) gives the following brilliant translation: 'die Ackerbauers und Stehestills, Schmerbauchs und Scheuegotts, die Gurkes und Schluckaufs, Schöpfkelles und Knobelwursts, die Schmatzferkels und Salztopfs.' It may be noted in passing that *ut Messores* is an unnecessary conjecture by Heraeus for *Cimessores*, the reading of the Hersfeldensis and the Fuldensis, defended by Bartalucci (1960), as meaning 'Cabbage-eaters', from *cyma* and *edere* (on p. 150). Bartalucci offers many more ingenious suggestions, which I will not go into here. He ends his article with this admonition: 'Alterare questi nomi è inutile gioco congeturalistico: essi, così come ci sono pervenuti nella tradizione migliore, rispondono pienamente all' assunto morale e satirico dello scrittore.'

²⁸ Witness his criticism of Petronius Probus in 27.11.1, who owned property all over the Roman world *iuste an secus, non iudicii est nostri*.

²⁹ Ammianus is one of three sources for this biographer, who in all probability is identical with L. Marius Maximus Perpetuus Aurelianus, consul in 223. He is mentioned thirty times in the *Historia Augusta*, in which he seems to have been used as a source for the lives from Hadrian up to Caracalla. The fragments are to be found in Barbieri 1952. There is another reference to Marius Maximus in the Scholia on Juvenal 4.53. See for this biographer Birley 1995 and 1997, and for an extremely sceptical view Paschoud 1999. Wittchow (2001, 321 n.19) has the interesting suggestion that Ammianus may have chosen the reign of Nerva as his starting point not so much in continuation of Tacitus, but rather in emulation with Marius Maximus.

³⁰ Cf. the judgment on Petronius Probus, quoted above n.28

in common with Juvenal's satires. Different answers have been suggested. 'Perhaps he was not altogether attracted by the thought that he was himself a part of the Syrian Orontes which had flowed into the Tiber!,' Thompson proposed.³¹ For my part, I would suggest that Ammianus disapproved of the triviality and, at least where Juvenal is concerned, the scurrility of the subject matter of both authors. For Juvenal this needs no explanation. For Marius Maximus we have only the testimony of the *Historia Augusta*, where he is qualified as *homo verbosissimus, qui et mythistoricis se voluminibus implicavit* (Q 1.2).³² Neither author, therefore, contributes anything to *doctrina* and both of them fall far below the standard required of historical writing, whose task it is *ipsas rerum digerere summitates* (31.5.10).

The only systematic study of possible traces of Juvenal in Ammianus' work has been undertaken by Rees 1999. In his article Rees compares passages from both writers classified according to four categories: rhetorical trope, subject matter, victim of satire, and lexical echoes. Under 'rhetorical trope' we find very broad notions such as the contrast between past and present time, exaggeration, and the insertion of catalogues or enumerations, that are indeed found in both writers (and in many others besides), but without any verbal correspondences. In some cases, such as the juxtaposition of 28.4.4 and Juv. 1.22-9, I cannot even detect a thematical correspondence. The only parallel that merits attention is that between Juv. 3.107-8 *laudare paratus / si bene ructavit, si rectum minxit amicus* and 27.3.5 *homo indignanter admodum sustinens, si etiam cum spueret, non laudaretur, ut id quoque prudenter praeter alios faciens*. Ammianus' words look like a bowdlerized and priggish paraphrase of the poet, but in the absence of verbal correspondences I would hesitate to call it an allusion. To the categories 'subject matter' and 'victim of satire' (the dividing line between the two categories is not made clear) belongs a large number of satirical themes and stock characters such as legacy hunting, ostentation of riches, gambling, excessive din-

³¹ Thompson 1947; repr. 1969, 15, with reference to Juv. 3.62 *iam pridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*. Smith 1994 pointed to the virulent anti-Greek feelings expressed in *Satire* 3. Rees (1999) suggested (on p. 150) that Ammianus was stung by the qualification of historians in Juv. 7.105 as *genus ignavum, quod lecto gaudet et umbra*.

³² What is meant by *mythistoriae* can be inferred from OM 1.5: the (fictitious) biographer Cordus has written about trivialities *quasi vel de Traiano aut Pio aut Marco sciendum sit, quotiens processerit, quando cibos variaverit et quando vestem mutaverit et quos quando promoverit. quae ille omnia exsequendo libros mythistoriis replevit talia scribendo, cum omnino rerum vilium aut nulla scribenda sint aut nimis pauca*. From 26.1.1 it is clear how Ammianus valued this kind of writing.

ners, eunuchs, flatterers and clients. Here again one looks in vain for lexical agreement and the only conclusion can be that several abuses denounced by Ammianus were also criticized by Juvenal, which is not surprising.³³ The category 'lexical' contains three items, only one of which seems worthy of note: 28.2.4 *nec in publicum prodeunt nec prandent ... antequam ephemeride scrupulose sciscitata* e.q.s. and Juv. 6.573-81: *in cuius manibus ... tritas cernis ephemeridas ... aegra licet iaceat, capiendo nulla videtur / aptior hora cibo nisi quam dederit Petosiris*. The consultation of a horoscope before taking a meal and the rare *ephemeris* may well be a reminiscence of Juvenal.³⁴ All in all Rees' survey yields a meagre harvest, one or two watered down reminiscences, no convincing allusions, let alone references.³⁵ It is of course an established fact that Juvenal was *en vogue* in the second half of the fourth century,³⁶ and to my mind it is *a priori* likely that Ammianus read him, but I do not think that Rees' presentation of the evidence justifies the conclusion on p. 150 that 'this accumulation of parallels in style, content, victim and lexis indicates a *thorough and conscious employment of the Satires* in the composition of Ammianus' digressions'. Referring to Fornara's study (1992b) of the way in which Ammianus used his sources, Rees compares the way in which Ammianus evokes Sallust, Livy and Tacitus without actually naming them. In my opinion this comparison is not justified by the facts. The reader is reminded of these historians by a considerable number of literal quotations from their work, which prove that Ammianus has read them carefully as stylistic models. The questionable correspondences between Juvenal and Ammianus do not justify adding Juvenal's name to the list of authors evoked in the *Res gestae* on a par with the historians mentioned above, let alone Cicero and Vergil.

³³ The one case where there is verbal similarity, viz. 14.6.9 *sudant sub ponderibus lacerarum, quas ... iugulis ipsis annectunt, nimia subtegminum tenuitate perflabiles* and Juv. 6.259 *hae sunt quae tenui sudant in cyclade*, is not mentioned. These passages are discussed along with texts from Jerome and Claudian by Cameron 1965.

³⁴ Also *in publicum prodeunt* may have been inspired by *ad primum lapidem vectari cum placet* in Juv. 6.577.

³⁵ For the terms 'allusion' and 'reference' see Hinds 1998, 21-5.

³⁶ Highest 1954, 180-90; Cameron 1964; Knoche 1984, 95.

9. Menippean Satire and Lucian

In his comparative survey of Greek and Roman literature Quintilian distinguishes the verse satire as represented by Lucilius, Horace and Persius from another branch of satire of which Varro is the oldest Roman representative.³⁷ This older form of satire, written mainly in prose and Greek in origin, is called Menippean after its creator, Menippus of Gadara. Latin specimens of the genre after Varro are Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and Petronius' *Satyrica*. The best known and best preserved Greek representative of the genre is the Syrian Lucian of Samosata. In terms of direct influence Lucian may well have been more important for Ammianus than Juvenal. Two works of his in particular are thematically very close to Ammianus' digressions, *Nigrinus* and *De mercede conductis*.³⁸ The former is a straightforward attack on Roman life and manners from a Greek philosopher named Nigrinus. On entering the City he immediately regrets having left Greece to come to see τὸν ἐνταῦθα θόρυβον, συκογάντας καὶ προσαγορεύσεις ὑπερηφάνους καὶ δεῖπνα καὶ κόλακας καὶ μαιφονίας καὶ διαθηκῶν προσδοκίας καὶ φιλίας ἐπιπλάστους (*Nigr.* 17).³⁹ This reads like a table of contents of Ammianus' digressions. There are thematical correspondences with the digressions on every page. The philosopher pours scorn both on the arrogant rich and on the servile flatterers who throw away their dignity only in order to obtain a dinner invitation. Like in Ammianus, the ordinary people get off just as badly. What is more, there are verbal correspondences which make it highly probable in my opinion that Ammianus read and has imitated Lucian. Compare for instance *Nigr.* 13, in which Lucian describes a flashy Roman, whose behaviour in the baths is strongly reminiscent of a similar scene in *Res gestae* 28.4.8-9:⁴⁰

³⁷ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.95: *alterum illud etiam prius saturae genus, sed non sola carminum varietate mixtum condidit Terentius Varro, vir Romanorum eruditissimus.*

³⁸ The similarities between some of the scenes depicted in these works and Juvenal 3 and 5 are so pronounced that both Courtney (1980, 624-9) and Bompaigne (1958, 508) are inclined to believe that Lucian made use of Juvenal.

³⁹ 'the hurly-burly there – informers, haughty greetings, dinners, flatterers, murders, legacy-hunting, feigned friendships' (the translations from Lucian are by A.M. Harmon).

⁴⁰ This parallel and the next one I found in Rosen 1982, 98 and Van de Wiel 1989, 21 n. 10.

Nigr. 13:

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ κὰν τοῖς γυμνασίοις
καὶ λουτροῖς ὀχληρὸς ἦν θλίβων
τοῖς οἰκέταις καὶ στενοχωρῶν τοὺς
ἀπαντῶντας.⁴¹

28.4.8-9:

*praegresso exercitu arma cogentes
manipulatim concitato fragore sequitur
multitudo servorum. tales ubi comitan-
tibus singulos quinquaginta ministris
tholos introierint balnearum e.q.s.*

In *Nigr.* 21 the description of the way in which the rich man flaunts his purple garments and his rings recalls Amm. 14.6.9. The way he wishes to be greeted resembles Ammianus 28.4.10 in minute detail:

Nigr. 21:

πῶς γὰρ οὐ γελοῖοι μὲν πλου-
τοῦντες αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰς πορφύριδας
προφαίνοντες καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους
προτείνοντες ... οἱ δὲ σεμνότεροι
καὶ προσκυνεῖσθαι περιμένοντες
... δεῖ προσελθόντα καὶ ὑποκύψαν-
τα ... τὸ στήθος ἢ τὴν δεξιὰν
καταφιλεῖν, ζηλωτὸν καὶ περίβλεπ-
τον τοῖς μηδὲ τουτοῦ τυγχάουσιν.⁴²

28.4.10:

*ex his quidam, cum salutari pectoribus
oppositis coeperint, osculanda capita
in modum taurorum minacium
obliquantes adulatoribus offerunt
genua savianda vel manus id illis
sufficere ad beate vivendum existim-
antes.*

The Roman *plebs* is described as follows:

Nigr. 29:

Ἡδὲ δὲ τούτων (sc. the philoso-
phers) ἀποστὰς τῶν ἄλλων αὐθις
ἀνθρώπων ἐμέμνητο καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ
πόλει ταραχὰς διεξίημι καὶ τὸν
ὠθισμὸν καὶ τὰ θεάτρα καὶ τὸν
ἵπποδρομον καὶ τὰς τῶν ἡνιόχων
εἰκόνας καὶ τὰ τῶν ἵππων ὀνόματα
καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς στενωποῖς περὶ
τούτων διαλόγους· πολλὴ γὰρ ὥς
ἀληθῶς ἡ ἵππομανία καὶ πολλῶν

28.4.29-30:

*eisque (the plebeians) templum et
habitaculum et contio et cupitorum
spes omnis Circus est Maximus; et
videre licet per fora et compita et
plateas et conventicula circulos multos
collectos ... inter quos hi, qui ad
satietatem vixerunt ... clamitant saepe
rem publicam stare non posse, si futura
concertatione, quem quisque vindicat,
carceribus non exsiluerit princeps et*

⁴¹ 'But when he made himself a nuisance at the athletic clubs and the baths by jostling and crowding passers with his retinue' e.q.s.

⁴² 'To begin with, are not the rich ridiculous? They display their purple gowns and show their rings ... some, lordlier than the rest, even require obeisance to be made to them ... you must go up, bow your head ... and kiss the man's breast or his hand, while those who are denied even this privilege envy and admire you!'

ἤδη σπουδαίων εἶναι δοκούντων
ἐπείληπται.⁴³

*inomialibus equis parum cohaerenter
circumflexerit metam.*

Lucian's *De mercede conductis* describes the plight of a salaried professor in a Roman household. He has to fawn upon his rich patron and to deal with the *nomenclator*:

Merc. cond. 10:

ἔωθεν τε ἐξανιστάμενον περιμέ-
νειν ὠθούμενον καὶ ἀποκλειό-
μενον καὶ ἀναίσχυντον ἐνίοτε καὶ
ὀχληρὸν δοκοῦντα καὶ ὑπὸ
θυρωρῷ κακῶς συρίζοντι καὶ
ὀνομακλήτορι Λιβυκῷ ταττόμενον
καὶ μισθὸν τελοῦντα τῆς μνήμης
τοῦ ὀνόματος.⁴⁴

14.6.15:

*homines enim eruditos et sobrios ut
infaustos et inutiles vitant eo quoque
accedente, quod et nomenclatores
assueti haec et talia venditare mercede
accepta lucris quosdam et prandiis
inserunt subditicios ignobiles et
obscuros.*

From these examples I think we may conclude that the literary antecedents of Ammianus' Roman digressions must not be looked for exclusively in Latin verse satire, but also in the tradition of the Greek Menippean satire.

10. Contemporary satirical writing

When Ammianus was working on his satirical digressions he did not need to turn for inspiration to authors long dead. Satire was alive and kicking. 'The fourth century after Christ ... witnessed the sudden re-awakening of interest in the classical writers of satire' (Wiesen 1964, 3). The genre was practised by Christian and pagan authors alike. The former, from Tertullian onward, used the weapon of satire to ridicule the undignified tales of mythology. Jerome's natural aggressiveness honed by his intimate knowledge of the great satirists of the past made him a

⁴³ 'Leaving the philosophers, he recurred to the rest of mankind, and told about the uproar of the city, the crowding, the theatres, the races, the statues of the drivers, the names of the horses, and the conversations in the streets about these matters. The craze for horses is really great, you know, and men with a name for earnestness have caught it in great numbers.'

⁴⁴ 'You must get up early and wait about; meanwhile you are elbowed, you are kept locked out, you are sometimes thought impudent and annoying, you are subordinate to a doorman with a vile Syrian accent and to a Libyan master of ceremonies, and you tip them for remembering your name.'

master of the genre. It is an exciting thought that Ammianus wrote his first digression on Rome at a time when Jerome was a prominent figure in the City. Vices criticized by the classical satirists are attacked by Jerome in his letters and his invectives. I confine myself to one example, a scene worthy of Juvenal. It is a vignette of a rich lady conspicuously distributing alms to the poor, but betraying her cruelty in spite of herself:

*vidi nuper – nomen taceo, ne saturam putes – nobilissimam mulierum Romanarum in basilica beati Petri semiviris antecedentibus propria manu, quo religiosior putaretur, singulos nummos dispartire pauperibus ... anus quaedam annis pannisque obsita praecurrit ut alterum nummum acciperet; ad quam cum ordine pervenisset, pugnus porrigitur pro denario, et tanti criminis reus sanguis effunditur.*⁴⁵

In the same satirical vein Greek Christian authors like John Chrysostom and Asterius of Amasea inveighed against the pomp and circumstance of the rich and their display of fine clothes.⁴⁶

In a study of the Menippean tradition in Late Antiquity, Relihan describes Julian's *Caesares* as the work of an author who is influenced both by the Roman Seneca and the Greek Lucian. He distinguishes two lines along which Menippean satire developed, one 'neo-Varronian (encyclopedic and inwardly intellectual) and the Lucianic (outwardly social)' (Relihan 2005, 112). Both the *Caesares* and Ammianus' digressions clearly belong to the second type, which was the less productive in Late Antiquity, but would re-emerge in the Menippean satires of the Renaissance. Julian's *Caesares* had already be singled out as a pure specimen of Menippean satire by Nesselrath (1994), along with the invectives *In Rufinum* and *In Eutropium* of Ammianus' younger contemporary Claudian. Nesselrath detects traces of Lucian in Claudian, who, like Ammianus, had received a Greek literary education before moving from Alexandria to Rome. He concludes his article with the words 'bei einem solchen Mann wäre es geradezu verwunderlich, wenn er nicht mit der griechischen menippeischen Tradition in Berührung gekommen wäre'. The same might rightfully be said of Lucian's fellow countryman Ammianus.

⁴⁵ *Ep.* 22.32. A wealth of examples is to be found in Wiesen 1964. For other Latin Christian authors, such as Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Ambrose, see Weston 1915.

⁴⁶ Both authors are quoted in Valesius' commentary at 14.6.16.

Appendix

Survey of the contents of the two Roman digressions (corresponding themes are italicized).

14.6 (1,300 words)	28.4 (1,600 words)
1 <i>Prefecture of Orfitus.</i>	1-3 <i>Prefectures of Olybrius and Ampelius.</i>
2 Why Ammianus, writing about Rome, has only trivialities to report.	2-4 Measures against gluttony not carried through.
3-6 <i>Lebensaltervergleich.</i>	6-27 <i>Nobilitatis errata.</i>
7-24 <i>Nobilium instituta.</i>	7 Praenominum claritudo. Pride in family names.
7 Lack of respect for their city's greatness.	8 <i>Silk garments. Armies of slaves</i>
8 Gilded statues. Example of Cato Maior.	9 Scene in the baths. Behaviour towards prostitutes.
9 <i>Carriages and garments.</i>	10 <i>Greeting ceremonies. Arrogance and condescension in dealing with foreigners.</i>
10 They boast of their riches. Contrast with simplicity of ancestors.	11 Fascination for horse races.
11 Example of Valerius Publicola.	12 Flatterers praise their luxurious houses.
12 Warm reception of foreigner at first visit.	13 At dinner parties the weight of fish and dormice are noted down by <i>notarii</i> .
13 <i>Arrogant treatment next day. Not turning up at dinner is a crime.</i>	14-15 <i>No respect for erudition.</i> Close reading of Juvenal and Marius Maximus. The example of Socrates.
14-15 <i>Dinner invitations go to people interested in races, gambling, and magic; corrupt nomenclatores.</i>	16 Arbitrariness in punishing slaves.
16-17 <i>Mensarum voragines (in praeteritione). Aristocrats and their wives followed by armies of servants, slaves, and eunuchs. Semiramis.</i>	17 <i>Not turning up at a dinner is a worse crime than murder.</i>
18 <i>No respect for erudition.</i> Libraries closed like tombs. Monstrous musical instruments.	18 Outings to the country compared to military expeditions. Fear of heat and sun.
19 Foreigners expelled during famine, chorus-girls allowed to stay.	19 After bathing they don their <i>expensive clothes.</i>
	20 Lack of attention for an old soldier's tale(?)

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| 20 | Women dancers performing mimes. | 21 | <i>Only gambling creates real friendships. Presumption of gamblers.</i> |
| 21 | In the old days foreigners were treated with respect. | 22 | Rich people are pressurized to write their wills. After doing so, they die suddenly(?) |
| 22 | Nowadays strangers do not count, unless they are old, childless and rich. | 23 | Even a humble post fills them with pride. |
| 23-24 | Fear of contagious diseases. Sick friends are avoided. | 24 | They deny heavenly powers, but do nothing without consulting their horoscopes. |
| 25-26 | <i>Turba imae sortis et paupertinae. Interested only in taberna, theatrum, alea, aurigae.</i> | 25 | When they are forced to pay their debts, they turn to <i>aurigae</i> for help. |
| | | 26 | Husbands and wives, assisted by lawyers and astrologists, quarrel about wills. |
| | | 27 | Humble when asking for a loan, haughty when it is pay back time. |
| | | 28-34 | <i>Otiosa plebs.</i> |
| | | 28 | Pride in family names. |
| | | 29 | <i>vinum, tesserae, voluptates, Circus Maximus.</i> |
| | | 30-31 | <i>They think the well-being of the state depends on the outcome of the races.</i> |
| | | 32-33 | <i>At the theatre they expect bribes and demand the expulsion of foreigners. Vulgar yells.</i> |
| | | 34 | <i>Gluttony.</i> |

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*VIR UTRIUSQUE LITERATURAE NON VULGARITER
CALLENS EMUNCTAEQUE NARIS*
Sur Ghelen, éditeur d'Ammien Marcellin

Plusieurs écrivains nous ont dit qu'à la base de leur roman il y avait eu une situation particulière ou même une simple phrase. Ma conférence pour ce Colloque en honneur de François Paschoud est née de la caractérisation du savant Sigismundus Gelenius faite par son patron, l'imprimeur Jérôme Frobenius. Dans la préface à son édition des *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Bâle 1533, il est appelé *vir utriusque literaturae non vulgariter callens emunctaeque naris*, «connaisseur sans pareil des deux littératures à l'odorat subtil.» Cette description convient parfaitement au professeur de latin de l'Université de Genève, dont le chef d'œuvre est l'édition avec un commentaire riche et lucide de l'historien grec Zosime. J'ai voulu absolument utiliser cette caractérisation et, pour cette raison, j'ai commencé à étudier de plus près l'œuvre de Ghelen, comme je l'appellerai désormais, qui travaillait avec son collègue aîné Bilde von Reinau, mieux connu sous le nom latin Beatus Rhenanus et qui, sous la supervision d'Érasme, a édité tant d'œuvres pour l'imprimerie de Frobenius, père et fils. Il va sans dire que Ghelen ne m'intéresse pas seulement parce qu'il m'a procuré un titre frappant pour cette conférence, mais aussi parce qu'il a joué un rôle de la plus haute importance dans l'histoire de la constitution du texte d'Ammien. À cause de cela, mes collègues et moi-même sont très souvent confrontés à l'œuvre de Ghelen en écrivant nos commentaires sur Ammien.

La caractérisation que je viens de citer relève d'une belle connaissance de la littérature latine, puisqu'elle est une allusion à l'appréciation qu'avait Horace de Lucilius, son prédécesseur dans le genre de la satire. Il l'appelle dans le premier livre de ses *Sermones*, 1,4,7-8: *facetis / emunctae naris*, «amusant, à l'odorat subtil». Cette allusion érudite n'a rien de surprenant, puisque Frobenius l'a emprunté sans doute à Érasme, qui, dans sa correspondance, parle maintes fois et dans des tournures diverses des connaissances profondes, de la fiabilité et du jugement sûr de Ghelen. L'éloge le plus beau, à mon avis, se trouve dans la lettre 1529: *vir citra omnem ostentationem exquisitè doctus et, quod in eruditissimis rarum est, emunctae naris exacti iudicii*: «un savant extraordinaire, sans ostentation

et, ce qui est rare chez les érudits, avec le nez fin et le jugement réfléchi». ¹ J'ajoute que le nez fin et le jugement sûr concernent la capacité de distinguer dans des textes anciens ce qui est acceptable et ce qui ne l'est pas. C'est donc «sens critique» plutôt que «goût littéraire».

D'ailleurs, Érasme n'était pas uniquement élogieux à l'égard de Ghelen. À propos de son édition d'Ambroise, il écrit «j'ai confié une partie de l'œuvre à Sigismonde, homme érudit et de bon sens, mais paresseux». ² Bien que cette dernière caractérisation ne s'applique pas du tout au héros du Colloque, elle est importante pour l'appréciation de Ghelen comme *editor* ou, comme disait Érasme, *castigator* de textes anciens. Plus dure encore est sa critique sur la tendance de Ghelen à accepter sans réfléchir beaucoup de lectures provenant d'un manuscrit inconnu de Plinie l'Ancien: «Je l'ai averti qu'il ne fallait pas faire confiance à ce manuscrit, mais il ne m'a pas écouté. ... Il croit qu'il a fait quelque chose de merveilleux, mais à mon avis c'est un crime inexpiable.» ³

Quelques renseignements biographiques: Ghelen (ou Gelenius, ou Gelénsky) est né en 1497 dans une noble famille de Prague. À l'âge de sept ans, il part avec son gouverneur Wenzel de Pisek pour le grand voyage en Italie. Il passe des années à Bologne et à Venise, où il étudie le grec chez le grand Marcus Musurus, *vere Musarum custos et antistes*, comme l'appellera son ami Rhenanus. Avant de retourner en Bohême il fait un voyage en Sicile, Sardaigne, France et Allemagne. Pour des raisons financières, il est obligé d'enseigner le grec comme «Privatdozent» à Prague. En 1524, il s'installe à Bâle dans la maison d'édition de Frobenius et y passera le reste de ses jours jusqu'à sa mort en 1554. Il refuse une invitation à la chaire de grec à l'université de Nürnberg. Chez Frobenius, il travaille comme éditeur de textes latins, grecs et hébreux. Il entretient une relation scolaire et amicale avec Beatus Rhenanus et, à distance respectueuse, avec Érasme, son aîné de quelques trente ans. Dans une de ses lettres, il évoque avec nostalgie les longues conversations nocturnes avec ces deux savants. Le nombre d'éditions dirigées par lui seul ou en collaboration avec Rhenanus est impressionnant. Parmi beaucoup d'autres, il publie les comédies d'Aristophane, les hymnes de Callimaque, des œuvres géographiques et Flave Josèphe. Il

¹ Les lettres d'Érasme sont citées d'après l'édition Allen. Voir aussi *Ep.* 1767 : *Habet (Frobenius) domi virum (Gelenius) utriusque literaturae doctissimum parique fide praeditum et Ep.* 1535 *Gelenio praeclare docto emunctaeque naris homine.*

² *Ep.* 2033 *partem commisi Sigismundo castigatori, viro docto bonique iudicii, sed pigro.*

³ *Ep.* 3019 *Admonui, ne fideret illi exemplari, sed auditus non sum. ... Gelenius putat se rem mirificam praestitisse, ego censeo crimen esse inexpiable.*

traduit en latin Denys d'Halicarnasse, Appien et Philon le Juif. Pour la littérature latine, il s'est rendu utile par ses éditions d'Ammien Marcellin, et, en collaboration avec Rhenanus, de Tite-Live. En plus, il a édité des auteurs chrétiens comme Arnobe et Tertullien et, avec Érasme, on l'a vu, d'Ambroise. Il a publié des *Adnotationes* sur Pline l'Ancien et finalement, il a publié un *Lexicon symphonum*, c'est-à-dire un dictionnaire comparé du grec, latin, allemand et tchèque. Alors, pourquoi *piger*? Nous le verrons plus tard.

Pour bien estimer l'apport de Ghelen à la constitution du texte d'Ammien, il faut remonter dans l'histoire. Nous possédons quinze manuscrits des *Res gestae*. Un seul, qui à l'heure actuelle se trouve dans la Biblioteca Apostolica (V), date du neuvième siècle. L'origine de ce manuscrit est l'abbaye de Fulda, d'où son nom de *Fuldensis*. Les autres datent des quatorzième et quinzième siècles et dépendent soit directement, soit indirectement du *Fuldensis*. Par conséquent, l'établissement du texte ammien serait relativement simple, mis à part le fait que le *Fuldensis* est criblé de fautes et présente des lacunes considérables. Mais – et ici Ghelen entre en scène – quand en 1533 Ghelen préparait son édition des *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, dont faisaient partie les *Res gestae* d'Ammien Marcellin, il pouvait consulter un manuscrit provenant de l'abbaye d'Hersfeld, l'*Hersfeldensis* (M). Son patron Frobenius l'annonce avec fierté dans sa préface, que j'ai déjà citée: «l'éminent abbé d'Hersfeld a bien voulu mettre gratuitement à notre disposition un manuscrit.»⁴ Ce codex *Hersfeldensis* a disparu après la publication du volume des *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Ce n'est qu'en 1865 qu'on a retrouvé six feuilles écrites des deux côtés de ce codex contenant des passages des livres 23, 28 et 30. Les feuilles avaient fourni des pages de garde aux archives du village de Friedewald à dix kilomètres d'Hersfeld. Elles ont été publiées avec soin par Nissen, de sorte que nous puissions nous faire une idée précise du manuscrit dont Ghelen s'est servi pour son édition. Les deux manuscrits médiévaux sont de toute évidence étroitement liés. La relation entre les deux, V et M, a été l'objet d'une discussion animée entre des savants comme Ludwig Traube et Theodor Mommsen. Ce dernier considérait le *Fuldensis* comme une copie de l'*Hersfeldensis*, un seul savant croyait le contraire, d'autres encore, parmi lesquels Traube, considéraient les deux comme issus d'un ancêtre commun.

⁴ *Exemplar manu descriptum gratis et alacriter suppeditavit egregius princeps Abbas Hersfeldensis.*

L'opinion de Mommsen, que le Fuldensis – et par conséquence tous les manuscrits d'Ammien que nous possédons – dérive de l'Hersfeldensis, a finalement gagné. L'argumentation irréfutable, à mon avis, a été donnée par le savant américain Robinson dans un article datant de 1936. Il y a dix-huit ans, en 1990, quelques minuscules fragments de l'Hersfeldensis ont été trouvés dans la bibliothèque de Marburg et publiés dans *Mnemosyne* par Broszinski et Teitler. Malheureusement, ces fragments ne nous ont apporté rien de vraiment nouveau.

Dans sa préface de 1533, Frobenius vante la supériorité de son édition: « nous avons introduit un très grand nombre de corrections, comblé des lacunes en ajoutant parfois des lignes entières, et le grec dans le texte, dont même la Sibylle n'aurait pas deviné le sens, est présenté sous une forme lisible et compréhensible. »⁵ Cette dernière remarque concerne la traduction en grec dans le livre 17,4,18-24 des *Res gestae* de l'inscription sur l'obélisque que Constance avait transporté à Rome. Le copiste du Fuldensis avait perdu courage après deux lignes de cette traduction, mais l'Hersfeldensis en offre le texte intégral. La fierté de Frobenius dans ce texte publicitaire paraît parfaitement justifiée. Son édition est bien supérieure aux précédentes. Selon Frobenius, ce progrès n'est pas le résultat de *inanis coniectura*, de conjectures sans fondement, mais de l'utilisation du manuscrit prêté par l'éminent abbé. Il prétend même que le texte de Ghelen est plutôt conservateur, où il dit *Nos quamquam inter Scyllam et Charybdim medium cursum tenere studuimus, tamen in priorem partem maluimus esse proniores*.

Si Ghelen, dans son édition de 1533, avait reproduit fidèlement le texte de l'Hersfeldensis et s'il avait indiqué, dans les cas où il jugeait nécessaire de s'en éloigner, quel était le texte de son manuscrit, nous aurions eu une connaissance précise du texte dont dépendent tous nos manuscrits. Hélas, ce n'est pas du tout le cas. Nous savons seulement par la préface de Frobenius que Ghelen disposait de l'Hersfeldensis. Dans l'édition même, il n'y en a aucune indication. Ghelen différerait de son ami et collaborateur Rhenanus en ceci, que Rhenanus mentionne régu-

⁵ Texte complet: *Nos nacti vetustum exemplar manu descriptum innumera loca castigavimus, lacunas aliquot explevimus scribarum incuria praetermissas et in his versus interdum integros restituimus, Graeca omnia quae vel prorsus aberant, vel sic aderant ut frustra adessent, quum vix a Sibylla quid esset scriptum divinari posset, reposuimus. Nihil autem horum ex inani coniectura, quae saepe fallit, dum in suo quisque commento sibi pulcher est, sed ex fide vetusti codicis. Non fugit nos, ab utrisque peccari, tum ab iis qui nimium fidunt manu descriptis codicibus, quasi protinus rectum sit, quidquid in illis invenitur, tum ab his qui de suo capite mutant, adimunt, addunt quod libet. Nos quamquam inter Scyllam et Charybdim medium cursum tenere studuimus, tamen in priorem partem maluimus esse proniores.*

lièrement qu'il offre une conjecture, disant *emendavimus* ou *addidimus*, ou bien qu'il suit *antiquior lectio*, *syncera lectio* ou même *pristina lectio*. Ghelen ne donne aucune justification de sa méthode, de sorte que nous devons retracer nous-mêmes son *modus operandi* au moment de la préparation de son édition et en premier lieu, s'il a utilisé des éditions antérieures. Pour répondre à cette question, il faut passer ses prédécesseurs en revue. L'*editio princeps*, de Sabinus, parut en 1474 à Rome. Elle était fondée sur une copie du Fuldensis (R), qui s'arrête à la fin du livre 26. En un sens, c'était une édition exemplaire, puisque Sabinus reproduisait scrupuleusement même les lacunes et les fautes évidentes de ce manuscrit. La seconde édition, de Petrus Castellus, fut publiée en 1517 à Bologne. Elle était à son tour fondée sur l'*editio princeps*. Tous les éditeurs suivants ont fait la lecture à Castellus, et pour cause. Henri de Valois écrit dans la préface à sa propre édition de 1636 que Castellus était dépourvu d'intelligence et de goût et qu'il avait fantasmé sans consulter aucun manuscrit. Il avait même gauchement comblé des lacunes avec pour résultat un texte totalement incompréhensible.⁶ Il ne fait pas de la réclame pour la maison Frobenius, qu'elle a simplement réimprimé ce texte inférieur dans l'édition de 1518 des *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, sous le nom de *editio Erasmi Basiliensis* (bien qu'Érasme n'y fût pour rien dans cette édition). Il est évident que, pour les livres 14 à 26, Ghelen s'est basé sur cette édition antérieure de la maison Frobenius à côté de l'Hersfeldensis. Puisque cette édition s'arrêtait à la fin du livre 26, Ghelen en était réduit à l'Hersfeldensis pour les livres suivants. L'Hersfeldensis continuait jusqu'à 30,9,6, où Ghelen écrit *reliqua in archetypo desiderantur*. La nouvelle Frobeniana, qui parut le premier juillet 1533, comptait donc, grâce au nouveau manuscrit, quatre livres de plus que l'*editio Erasmi*. Cependant, le petit triomphe pour la maison éditrice fut gâché par la parution au mois de mai de la même année de l'édition d'Accursius chez le concurrent Silvanus Otmar d'Augsbourg. Non seulement l'*Accursiana* devançait la *Frobeniana* de deux mois, elle était aussi la première édition complète de tous les livres conservés et se terminait avec la sphragis célèbre *haec ut miles quondam et Graecus* e.q.s. de 31,16,9 grâce au manuscrit E, une copie du Fuldensis avec des annotations fines de Poggio Bracciolini, qu'Accursius avait amenée d'Italie.

Derrière ces faits un peu secs se cachent probablement une histoire

⁶ P. Castellus vir nec ingenio nec iudicio ullo praeditus. Ac nescius (sic!) utrum stuporem hominis mirari magis, an audaciam atque impudentiam debeas. Nam neque ullum codicem manuscriptum consuluit; et coniecturae adeo infeliciter indulsit, ut monstra quaedam ac deliria in Marcellini libros intruserit.

mouvementée et, peut-être, de l'espionnage industriel. Il existe en effet des correspondances entre les deux éditions qui portent à croire que Ghelen a eu accès aux preuves d'Accursius ou, alternativement, qu'il connaissait des leçons du manuscrit E utilisé par ce dernier. Il n'y a aucune indication du contraire, c'est-à-dire qu'Accursius avait accès au matériel dont disposait Ghelen. L'exemple le plus probant d'une leçon empruntée par Ghelen à l'Accursiana a été signalé par Seyfarth (1962, 63-65). En 28,1,4 Ammien raconte l'histoire du poète Phrynichus, qui était puni par les Athéniens, indignés parce que dans sa tragédie *Μιλήτου αλωσις* il avait fait pleurer son public sur le sort de Milète, ville abandonnée par ses fondateurs, les Athéniens: *hos quoque dolores scaenicus adnumerasse fabulis insolenter* (ils s'indignaient) «parce qu'il avait eu l'insolence d'inclure jusqu'à ces malheurs au nombre des actions de théâtre» (traduction Mme Marié). Après *insolenter*, Accursius lit *Miletum relegatus est*, qui se trouve dans E et dans aucun autre manuscrit. Dans la Geleniana, nous lisons: *Miletumque relegatus est*. Selon toute probabilité, cette insertion, que Poggio a introduite dans E, était connue de Ghelen, soit directement, parce qu'il s'était emparé du manuscrit E, soit indirectement par les preuves d'Accursius.

Voici à grands traits la préhistoire de la Geleniana. Le problème que pose cette édition est claire: quelle est la partie du texte copiée de l'édition de 1518, quelles sont les leçons qui proviennent de l'Hersfeldensis, que sont des conjectures de Ghelen? Dans la majorité des cas, il est impossible de donner une réponse catégorique à cette question. Mais il y a des considérations générales qui peuvent nous aider à prendre position sur l'échelle graduelle entre confiance et scepticisme. Tout d'abord, il faut tenir compte du fait que cette édition a été produite en toute hâte. La concurrence féroce avec la maison éditrice de Silvanus Otmar poussa Ghelen à travailler avec la dernière énergie. Une comparaison mot à mot entre l'*editio Erasmi Basiliensis* et le manuscrit d'Hersfeld semble être exclue dans ces circonstances. Le temps manquait tout simplement. Par conséquence, là où la Geleniana, dans les livres 14 jusqu'à 26, est en accord avec l'édition Frobeniana antérieure, il n'y a pas de raison de supposer que la leçon provient de l'Hersfeldensis. La probabilité que Ghelen ait profité du manuscrit s'accroît considérablement à partir du livre 27, où l'Hersfeldensis était le seul, ou tout du moins le principal, témoin du texte dont disposait Ghelen.

Pour se faire une idée de son *modus operandi* dans les derniers livres, il faudra tout d'abord étudier son édition là où nous disposons des fragments de l'Hersfeldensis. Une comparaison complète entre ces frag-

ments et les leçons des autres manuscrits et l'édition de Ghelen se trouve dans la dissertation de Clark (1903, 19-28). Ce qui nous frappe immédiatement est l'insouciance à l'égard de l'orthographe. Un éditeur moderne serait sévèrement critiqué, mais je suppose que Ghelen n'en avait cure. Des fautes dans le manuscrit provenant d'une coupure erronée des mots du type *utiles* pour *ut ille* – elles sont légion – sont corrigées à la chaîne. Un bel exemple se trouve en 30,3,1 où Ghelen corrige *offertur praefecti relatio provido gentis Illyricae cladis* en *offertur praefecti relatio Probi docentis Illyrici clades*. Mais quand le texte devient vraiment compliqué ou même incompréhensible, Ghelen intervient brutalement. En 28,4,22-3, un vrai *locus conclamatus*, où le Hersfeldensis marque deux lacunes, Ghelen omet simplement les 14 mots entre *ut id* et *quisquam* et produit une transition en ajoutant *Alius*. Ceci sent la pratique bafouée du pauvre Castellus. Par contre, dans la suite du texte, il fait montre de son intelligence et de sa connaissance profonde de l'idiome d'Ammien par sa conjecture *cum dignitate licet, cervice tumida gradiens* «soit avec dignité, mais la nuque raide d'orgueil» pour l'incompréhensible *vice* (ou *vicet*) *umida gradies* du Fuldensis et de l'Hersfeldensis, surpassée seulement par la *palmaria* d'Henri de Valois *cum dignitate licet <mediocri> cervice tumida gradiens*. Les conjectures de Ghelen ne sont pas toutes réussies. Dans le même paragraphe 28,4,22, Ammien parle de gens qui se tiennent à l'affût des riches célibataires «qu'ils induisent par d'étonnants artifices à rédiger leurs dernières volontés». ⁷ *Praestrigiis* est une autre belle conjecture d'Henri de Valois pour *post regniis* de l'Hersfeldensis. Ghelen avait très bien compris la portée des mots, mais sa conjecture *eos technis* est inférieure à tous égards à celle de Valesius.

Plusieurs fautes de Ghelen s'expliquent seulement par la hâte avec laquelle il a travaillé. En 28,4,26 un passage incomplet et très altéré est suivi des mots :⁸ *ut Millius ait nec in bus humanis quicquam bos novunt nisi quod fructuosum sit amicos*. Ghelen encore une fois omet le passage incompréhensible, y compris les mots *ut Millius ait*, que Poggio avait déjà corrigés en *ut Tullius ait*. La citation de Cicéron est chez Ghelen conçue ainsi : *Nec in rebus humanis quicquam bonum norunt, nisi quod*

⁷ *ad voluntates tondendas allicientes post regniis miris* MV; *ad voluntates condendas allicientes eos technis miris* (Gel); *ad voluntates condendas allicientes praestrigiis miris* (Val).

⁸ *ut Millius ait nec in bus humanis quicquam bos novunt nisi quod fructuosum sit amicos* MV; Cic. Cato 79: *sed plerique neque in rebus humanis quicquam bonum norunt nisi quod fructuosum sit, et amicos* e.q.s.; *Nec in rebus humanis quicquam bonum norunt, nisi quod fructuosum. Sic amicos* Gel.

fructuosum. Sic amicos etc. L'omission de la référence à Cicéron et le maintien irréfléchi de *sic* ne se comprennent chez un latiniste de l'envergure de Ghelen que si on tient compte des circonstances sous lesquelles son édition a été réalisée.

En résumé, on peut dire que Ghelen a introduit beaucoup de corrections dans le texte. Dans la grande majorité, ces corrections sont innocentes et routinières. Dans quelques cas, les conjectures attestent l'érudition et l'intelligence de l'éditeur. Mais il y a aussi des interventions impatientes et brutales dans des endroits où le texte est gravement altéré. Le plus répréhensible est la manière dont il a détourné des lacunes. Somme toute, le jugement de Pasquali (1952³, 83) me semble plutôt bienveillant: «Il confronto dei sei fogli del Hersfeldensis ... ha dimostrato che il Gelenio procedeva ... in buona fede, ma congetturando furiosamente.»

Comme nous l'avons vu, Frobenius parlait dans sa préface de lacunes comblées et de lignes entières qui avaient été remises. En effet, il y a neuf lacunes de cette étendue dans son édition. Le nombre de lettres de ces lignes correspond à celui d'une ligne dans l'Hersfeldensis, ce qui apporte une confirmation supplémentaire à la thèse que le Fuldensis est une copie de l'Hersfeldensis. Un bel exemple est un texte pris de la description de la préfecture urbaine de Symmaque père:⁹ «Sous son administration, la Ville très sainte jouissait de la paix et de l'abondance plus pleinement qu'à l'ordinaire <et elle s'enorgueillit d'un pont superbe et très solide que lui-même fit construire> et dédia pour la plus grande joie de ses concitoyens.» Les mots en parenthèse proviennent de Ghelen et l'information a été confirmée de façon retentissante par une inscription trouvée en 1878, où nous lisons : *dedicandi operis honore delato iudicio princi(pum) maximor(um) L. Aur(elio) Avianio Symmacho v(iro) c(larissimo) ex praefectis urbi*. À elle seule, l'addition de ces neuf lignes manquantes, avec la traduction grecque de l'inscription de l'obélisque, rend l'édition de Ghelen inestimable.

Après ces éléments provenant sans aucun doute de l'Hersfeldensis, je voudrais attirer votre attention sur quelques aspects de la méthode de travail de Ghelen, qui nous aident à faire une différence entre ses conjectures et les leçons empruntées au manuscrit. Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir

⁹ 27,3,3 *quo instante urbs sacratissima otio copiisque abundantius solito fruebatur <et ambitioso ponte exsultat atque firmissimo, quem con>didit ipse et magna civium laetitia dedicavit; ILS 769: dedicandi operis honore delato iudicio princi(pum) maximor(um) L. Aur(elio) Avianio Symmacho v(iro) c(larissimo) ex praefectis urbi.*

que la prose d'Ammien montre une régularité quasi absolue dans les cursus accentuels par lesquels il termine ses cola. Les trois types principaux, qui représentent 93% des cas, sont le cursus planus, – tardus et velox.¹⁰ Par la suite, Ammien a tendance à introduire des changements dans l'ordre des mots à la fin de ses cola pour obtenir le cursus voulu. Prenons un paragraphe au hasard pour illustrer cette tendance: 27,4,4 (Scordisci) *saeui quóndam et trúces* (planus) *et, ut antíquitas dócet* (planus), *hostiis captivorum Bellonae litántes et Márti* (planus) *humanum-que sanguinem in ossibus capitum cavis bibéntes avidius* (au lieu de *avide* !) (tardus), *quorum asperitate post multiplices pugnárum aerúmnas* (planus) *saepe res Romana vexata postremo omnem amisit exercítum cum rectóre* (velox). L'importance du *cursus* n'a été découverte qu'il y a un siècle par Meyer (1905, 258-72) et le *cursus* a été étudié à fond par Harmon en 1910. Depuis lors, c'est un instrument précieux pour la critique du texte d'Ammien. Pour Ghelen et ses contemporains, c'était une chose inconnue et cela se voit dans ses leçons, qui souvent négligent la structure métrique de la prose. Par exemple, en 27,3,10 il a substitué l'ordre plus conventionnel des mots *deflentium crebra damna* à *damna deflentium crébra* du Fuldensis qui montre le cursus planus régulier. Un autre exemple du même livre est 27,12,5, où le Fuldensis note *uxorem cum filio tuebátur Arsácis*, que Ghelen a changé en *uxorem cum filio Arsacis tuebatur*, avec un ordre des mots plus conventionnel au prix du cursus planus conservé dans V et, par la suite, en toute probabilité aussi dans l'Hersfeldensis. En jugeant des leçons de Ghelen à la fin des cola d'Ammien, il convient donc de poser la question si le texte est métriquement correct. Si ce n'est pas le cas, il y a là une indication claire que la leçon est une conjecture.

La tendance de Ghelen à aplanir les difficultés du texte ammien se retrouve aussi en d'autres endroits. Les études datant du début du siècle passé de linguistes suédois comme Hagendahl et Blomgren sur la latinité tardive nous ont ouvert les yeux quant aux changements qu'a subis le latin depuis la période classique. Sur ce point encore, Ghelen était moins instruit que nous pouvons l'être grâce à ces études suédoises et, de ce fait, il interprétait les déviations de la norme classique comme des fautes de la transmission du texte, qu'il jugeait nécessaire de corriger dans son édition. Je présente quelques exemples pris des livres 23 et 26: 23,1,2 *apud Hierosolyma templum, quod post multa et interneciva certamina obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito aegre est oppugnatum*. Ici,

¹⁰ planus: *revocávit in státum*; tardus: *sublátius éminens*; velox: *fécit et vectigáles*

Ghelen lit *expugnatum* au lieu de *oppugnatum* selon la distinction en latin classique entre *oppugnare* «monter l'assaut» et *expugnare* «prendre d'assaut», une distinction qui est régulièrement négligée en latin tardif.

En 23,1,4 Ghelen lit *legatos ad se missos ab urbe aeterna ... imperator honoribus diversis affecit*. Le Fuldensis a *adiemmissos*, qui semble être une altération légère de *ad eum missos*. Selon la règle que nos professeurs de latin nous ont inculquée, cela devrait être *ad se missos*, mais la distinction entre *se* et *is* est loin d'être maintenue strictement par Ammien. Ghelen a probablement produit un texte qu'il considérerait plus correct que la leçon des manuscrits.

Dans 26,5,9 nous lisons: *qui vastitatis propinquieribus locis longius discesserant incruenti*. Le rare fréquentatif *vastitare* se trouve trois fois dans le Fuldensis. Dans les trois endroits, Ghelen préfère le verbum simplex *vastare*. Cependant, l'emploi des fréquentatifs se multiplie en latin tardif. Ammien les emploie 103 fois. C'est un argument solide pour suivre le Fuldensis et pour considérer la leçon de Ghelen comme *lectio facilior* et correction manquée.

Un autre exemple pris de la description du tsunami en 26,10,16 *ut resecta voragine profundorum species natantium multiformes limo cernebantur valliumque vastitates et montium tunc ... suspicerent radios solis* (je cite la belle traduction de Mme Marié: «si bien que le gouffre des profondeurs fut mis à découvert, que l'on vit des espèces multiformes d'animaux marins pris dans la vase, et que les étendues immenses de vallées et de montagnes ... aperçurent alors au-dessus d'elles ... les rayons du soleil»). Ici, *cernebantur* est la leçon du Fuldensis, alors que Ghelen lit *cernerentur*. La variation du subjonctif et de l'indicatif dans les subordonnées finales chez Ammien est rare, mais pas sans parallèle, ce qui donne lieu à la supposition qu'ici encore Ghelen a cédé à sa tendance à normaliser le texte d'Ammien.

Pour finir, je ferai quelques remarques sur trois autres éditions de Ghelen, qu'il a réalisées seul ou en collaboration avec des collègues. Ce qui frappe en premier lieu, ce sont les analogies que présentent ces éditions jusque dans les détails, et la similarité des problèmes qu'elles ont soulevés. Pour l'édition de Tite-Live de 1535, faite en collaboration avec son ami Rhenanus, les deux éditeurs ont pu consulter parmi d'autres un manuscrit de Speyer, qui a disparu ultérieurement. Comme pour Ammien, Ghelen s'est basé sur une édition antérieure de Frobenius, sans qu'il l'eût corrigée systématiquement à l'aide du nouveau manuscrit. Cette édition avait probablement aussi été exécutée à la hâte. À propos

des *Adnotationes* de Ghelen, je cite Weissenborn (1877, 311): «il est incertain quelle est l'autorité de ce qu'il a tacitement corrigé, ou pris après émendation de F (l'édition antérieure) ou conservé des éléments provenant d'éditions plus vieilles, incorporés dans F.»

Plus frappantes encore sont les ressemblances dans le cas de l'édition de Tertullien. Pour la Frobeniana de 1550, Ghelen utilisait l'édition de Mesnart et un codex Masburensis. Ce codex – cela devient monotone – a disparu après la publication de la Frobeniana de Tertullien. Waszink remarque à ce propos dans l'introduction à son commentaire sur *De anima*: «Regarding the value of this manuscript it is impossible to make a definite statement, because Gelenius never indicates whether his divergencies from the text of Mesnartius are due to this manuscript or to conjectures of his own». Cependant, beaucoup de leçons de Ghelen se révèlent, après coup, être basées sur la tradition manuscrite suite à la découverte d'un manuscrit de Troyes qui date du douzième siècle. C'est pourquoi Souter (1923, 115) a remarqué: «I made a collation of this manuscript in 1920, and can testify that of the scores, or perhaps hundreds of readings cited as *Gel.*, hardly any are absent from this MS. Gelenius being then an honest man, we can trust his statements about the MSS. of other authors.» De plus, dans sa préface à cette édition, Ghelen fait mention de *complures codices veteres e Gallicanis Germanicisque bibliothecis conquisitos*. En 1951, on a retrouvé une feuille qui servait de page de garde dans les archives de Keppel. L'histoire de l'Hersfeldensis s'est donc répétée. La feuille a été publiée par Lieftinck (1951), qui a soutenu qu'elle appartenait à l'un de ces manuscrits germaniques parce que l'on y trouve les mêmes leçons que dans la Frobeniana.

Beaucoup plus sévère est le jugement de Robert Ireland, qui a édité *De rebus bellicis* dans la Teubneriana. Comme chez Ammien, Ghelen a disposé d'un manuscrit de Speyer, qui a disparu après la publication en 1552 de l'édition de Frobenius et qui contenait outre le *De rebus bellicis* entre autres la *Notitia dignitatum*. Les éditions d'Ammien et de *De rebus bellicis* présentent beaucoup de traits communs, et en particulier les traits fâcheux. Dans sa préface, qui est un texte satirique merveilleux, Ireland relève impitoyablement les imperfections de la Frobeniana. Ce qu'il reproche avant tout à Ghelen, qu'il qualifie de *homo nequam* et de *avis pessimi ominis*, c'est sa tendance à couper le texte là où il ne le comprenait pas, sans en avertir ses lecteurs.¹¹ En plus, Ireland a compté les

¹¹ Ireland praef. XX *sollemne erat Gelenio, homini nequam, quae in codicibus intellegere non valuit, ea inscio lectore radicitus excindere.*

manuscripts qui son perdus après être passés par l'imprimerie de Frobenius et il les énumère dans un passage plein d'insinuations.¹² À cela il faut répondre que nous ignorons tout des causes de la disparition de tant de manuscrits après leur utilisation dans l'imprimerie de Frobenius, mais en tout cas, c'est une perte très grave. C'est un peu comme si l'on ferme une porte et jette la clé après. Une intention malveillante ne peut pas être exclue, mais à quoi cela eût-il servi? Aurait-on voulu effacer les traces de son activité? Ou empêcher la concurrence de produire une meilleure édition avec les même matériaux? Il est difficile à deviner les considérations derrière les décisions des éditeurs, si c'étaient vraiment des décisions et pas simplement le hasard. Une intention malicieuse à mon avis ne compte certainement pas dans le cas de l'Hersfeldensis, parce les six feuilles retrouvées en 1975 se trouvaient à dix kilomètres de l'abbaye de Hersfeld, ce qui porte à croire que le manuscrit a été renvoyé à sa place d'origine. Ce qui est vraiment impardonnable, c'est la façon dont Ghelen, pas exclusivement dans le cas de l'Hersfeldensis, comme nous avons vu, a fait disparaître des traces de la tradition qu'il ne pouvait pas comprendre. À cet égard il contraste défavorablement à des contemporains comme Sabinus et Rhenanus. Ce dernier était probablement plus exigeant avec soi-même que son ami. Il écrit: «Personne ne veut travailler dur. La première idée qui leur vient à l'esprit, ils l'entassent dans leur texte. Ce qu'il faut, c'est pas seulement l'érudition, mais l'assiduité, l'effort et la minutie.»¹³

Après cette esquisse rapide de l'activité de Ghelen comme éditeur de textes anciens, je retourne à la caractérisation d'Érasme: *sed piger*. Serait-il possible qu'elle soit inspirée par la hâte et le manque de soin qu'on a si souvent reprochés à Ghelen? Cela me semble fort probable, parce que le mot *piger* est, à mon avis, emprunté, tout comme *emunctae naris*, à la caractérisation de Lucilius par Horace. Selon Horace, Lucilius

¹² id. praef. xvii *hi ergo amici* (Gelenius et Rhenanus) *eorumve agentes in rebus (...) bibliothecas compilabant monasteriorum a flumine Rheno non multum distantium, unde quidem eis eruiere contigit codices aliquot pretiosissimos et multae antiquitatis (...) quorum omnium librorum aut nulla in terris vestigia hodie supersunt aut misera tantum lacinia. Viserit suspiciosus lector, num hi codices senio fracti naturali quodam exitu perierint, an potius, editionibus publicatis, a possessoribus sint abiecti ut iam nullius valoris, an etiam e latebris suis extracti et dum preli Basileensis usibus inserviunt male vexati, dirum aliquod supplicium subierint quo maturius diem suum obirent.*

¹³ Titi Livii Patavini, p. 43 *Sed nemo vult laborare. Quidquid in mentem primum venit, id infulcimus ... At alia res est castigare veterum autorum libros. Eget enim non solum eruditione, sed et pertinaci studio, labore et diligentia.*

n'était pas seulement comique et doué d'un odorat subtil mais aussi

*garrulus atque piger scribendi ferre laborem,
scribendi recte; nam ut multum, nil moror.*

Par analogie, Gelenius était bien sûr un érudit; il publiait énormément de livres mais, au fond, il était paresseux.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

VIR HEROICIS CONNUMERANDUS INGENIIS *Ammianus' Final Verdict on the Emperor Julian*

At the end of his article with the charming title 'Clio's kaleidoscope', Piet Schrijvers (2004, 241) asks the following question: 'Considering that modern historiography about a recent and relatively well documented affair (the conduct of Jeremias de Decker, the professor of Latin at the UvA, during the war, DdH) has led to vastly divergent views, how great must be our amazed admiration for a Latinist, who in his commentary on a classical historian tries to unravel images of images, and who searches for the truth like a Platonic cave-dweller?' I am that Latinist, Ammianus' history is the cave, and the shadow on the wall is Julian. The rhetorical question is put gently. If Schrijvers were not such an amiable scholar, he would have written: 'If it is clearly impossible to reach a unanimous conclusion about someone's conduct during the Second World War in Holland, one has to be very naive indeed to spend years and years trying to find the truth about a man, in casu Julian, who died 1640 years ago.' I want to take this stimulating thought as the starting point for an account of Ammianus' final verdict on Julian.

Image and distortion

I will start with a bold statement: there is more information available about Julian, who died in 363, than about Jeremias de Decker, who passed away in 1953. We have Julian's own speeches and letters, and De Decker's academic publications and correspondence. These more or less cancel each other out. But whereas De Decker was not a very prominent professor, known only in the Flemish movement and in the small circle of his colleagues, Julian made his mark throughout the Roman empire in spite of his short reign, first as Caesar, later as Augustus. Because of his aggressive foreign policy and his religious views, which can be considered revolutionary as well as reactionary with equal justification, admirers and opponents have fiercely argued about him, both during his lifetime and long after it.¹ During his lifetime and shortly af-

¹ More about this in 'The Romanization of Julian' in chapter 19 of this book.

ter his death the orator Libanius from Antioch and bishop Gregory of Nazianzus gave their diametrically opposed opinions about Julian. Libanius' speeches about Julian are panegyrical in content, if not in form. They contain no critical comments. The bishop on the other hand uses his considerable rhetorical talents to denounce Julian as the embodiment of evil, the devil incarnate. Thus we have two irreconcilable images of one and the same person. But only this is certain: they are both heavily distorted. With regard to authors who are so clearly biased it must be possible to distinguish between subjective judgements and factual statements, or by comparing the two to spot deliberate omissions and distorted facts.

Ammianus' critical loyalty

In Ammianus' case things are more subtle. The distance in time is greater, because he writes some thirty years after Julian's death, and he shows greater detachment in his judgements. Although he does not leave us in any doubt that he admired Julian, whom he had served as *protector* or officer of the guard in Gaul and Persia, he differs from Libanius in that he does make critical comments, not about small imperfections, but about crucial issues of policy: finance and religion. When he describes the expedition against king Sapor II of Persia, in the course of which Julian was killed, admiration alternates with irritation, admiration for Julian's qualities as a person and a general, irritation regarding the recklessness which led to his death, and because he ignored the clear warnings of the gods. Evidently Ammianus did not only argue with himself. His account has an apologetic tenor. He wants to defend Julian against the criticisms of his opponents, both Christians and pagans, which were levelled at his decision to invade Persia. As it turned out, these criticisms were totally justified. After a speedy and successful march right up to the capital Ctesiphon, 30 km. south of modern Baghdad, Julian abandons the idea of a siege for reasons which are not quite clear. It is not known what precisely he was aiming to achieve with his invasion, or whether he had a specific aim at all. Whatever the case, he leads his army northwards along the Tigris, without food, whilst continuously and annoyingly being pursued by king Sapor, who avoids a pitched battle but hampers the retreat of the Roman army with skirmishes. In the course of one of these clashes, near Samarra, about a hundred kilometres above Baghdad, Julian is killed, whilst fighting heroically in the

most dangerous spots. At the time the emperor is 33 years old and has ruled as Augustus for only one and a half years.

The Ammianus Project

In 1935 P.J. de Jonge, the later headmaster of the grammar school in Hengelo (Twente), published a philological-historical commentary on the first surviving book of Ammianus, book 14; he continued with this work up to and including the commentary on book 19, which appeared in 1982. Because of the ever growing specializations in our field of study, and the very intensive way in which Late Antiquity has been studied during the last decades, it had become inconceivable for one individual to continue De Jonge's work. For that reason the torch has been taken up by a team of four Dutch classicists, the philologists J. den Boeft and myself, and the ancient historians J.W. Drijvers and H.C. Teitler – known in the specialist literature as Den Boeft *et al.* At this moment we are putting the finishing touches to book 25. The most important themes in this book are the end of Julian's life and Ammianus' final verdict on this emperor, who is the central character in his *Res gestae*. It has often been suggested that Ammianus, whose work now ends with the description of the battle of Adrianople (378) in book 31, had originally intended to conclude his work with the death of Julian. In chapter 3 of book 25 Ammianus gives an impressive description of Julian's deathbed and his words of farewell to his friends in which the emperor says that he sees death as a transition to a better state of being and as a gift of the gods for which one should be grateful. It is clear that this scene is modelled on the famous examples of Socrates and Seneca. We cannot ascertain whether the emperor himself was able to shape his final hours in this way or whether Ammianus gave them this form. We have to read the necrology in chapter 4, in which Ammianus tries to formulate a final verdict about his emperor, against this background.

When we divided the work between ourselves this chapter fell to Teitler and myself. We write *Philological and Historical Commentaries*. Teitler takes the responsibility for the historical part, of which his interpretation is fortunately very broad. The philological part can be subdivided into textual criticism, linguistic issues and literary aspects such as structure, text interpretation and narrative technique. Our contributions are roughly equal in scope. It goes without saying that our work is criticized and corrected by the other two. The final version is the com-

bined product of all four members of the team. Henceforth I will mainly discuss the problems which I personally have encountered when studying this chapter.

The composition of the necrology

First of all its position within the work and its composition. There are five cases where Ammianus writes a necrology after having reported the death of an emperor. The most extensive are those of Constantius, Julian's enemy and predecessor, of Julian himself and of Valentinian. The necrologies have in common that they present an enumeration of the *bona* and the *vitia* of the emperor. This applies also to the verdict on Julian, which is by far the longest of the three, five pages in the Teubner edition. Julian's necrology is unique because the emperor's good qualities are classified according to the four cardinal virtues, in the following order: *temperantia* – *prudentia* – *iustitia* – *fortitudo*. It is of great significance with regard to Ammianus' attitude towards Julian that he has followed the scheme of the panegyric here, as we find it in Menander Rhetor's rules for the laudatory speech and the speeches of the Panegyrici Latini. Ammianus adds to the cardinal virtues four qualities which a general should have because Julian is not a philosopher or a saint, but a supreme commander and an emperor. Cicero had ascribed these four qualities to Pompey in his *de imperio Cn. Pompei*. They are: *scientia rei militaris*, *auctoritas*, *felicitas* (success in battle) and *virtus*. Ammianus replaces *virtus*, which he had already used for virtue in general, with *liberalitas*, to indicate a quality which Julian himself was proud of, i.e. his φιλανθρωπία, which the historian interprets in a purely material sense as generosity. Then Ammianus proceeds to discuss the emperor's faults, which can be indicated with four keywords: *levitas*, *curiositas*, *superstitio* and *popularitatis cupiditas*. He concludes the chapter with a paragraph about the *forma*, the emperor's looks, and a defence of his policy towards Persia. The parts are distributed over the paragraphs of the chapter as follows:

- 1 Introduction
- 2-15 good qualities
 - cardinal virtues
 - 2-6 *temperantia*
 - 7 *prudentia*

	8-9	<i>iustitia</i>
	10	<i>fortitudo</i>
		qualities a general should have
	11	<i>scientia rei militaris</i>
	12-13	<i>auctoritas</i>
	14	<i>felicitas</i>
	15	<i>liberalitas</i>
16-21		bad qualities
		<i>levitas</i>
		<i>praesagiorum sciscitatio nimia</i> (<i>curiositas</i>)
		<i>superstitio</i>
		<i>popularitatis cupiditas</i>
22		<i>forma</i>
23-27		foreign policy.

The content of the necrology

Two things immediately stand out in the survey above: the *bona* are given much more room than the *vitia*, and among the virtues *temperantia* receives inordinate attention. Julian's chastity is apparent, since after the death of his spouse he did not indulge in sexual activity; moreover, his frugality with regard to food and drink is praised as well as the fact that he used to spend most of the night occupied with affairs of state and philosophical studies. It obviously meant a lot to Ammianus to demonstrate that the heathen Julian, in this respect at least, was the equal of the paragons of Christian asceticism. He writes, 25.4.6: *et si nocturna lumina, inter quae lucubrabat, potuissent voce ulla testari, profecto ostenderant inter hunc et quosdam principes multum interesse, quem norant voluptatibus ne ad necessitatem quidem indulsisse naturae*² (with *necessitas naturae* Ammianus means procreation).

Under the heading *prudentia* Ammianus mentions again the varied intellectual interests of the emperor as well as his knowledge about military affairs, which he deals with in detail later. This is slightly awkward. It proves that Ammianus' chosen scheme is a straightjacket. For that reason I find it unfortunate that he adopted this aspect from the panegyric. Not only does it lead to a forced classification of the qualities, it

² 'if the lamps by whose light he worked at night had been able to give a spoken testimony, they would undoubtedly have declared that there was a big difference between certain other emperors and Julian about whom they knew that he had never indulged his desires, not even for the sake of the demands of nature'.

also means that this part of the eulogy is somewhat didactic and enumerative. Nor can it be denied that the quotations from Plato and Bacchylides, which are meant to give some substance to the sections about Julian's *castitas*, make not only a perfunctory but also a pedantic impression. It is obvious that Ammianus' talents lie in the narrative sections and in speeches rather than in passages which give a summary and are of a higher abstract level.

The paragraphs about Julian's *vitia* are a lot more interesting. Without confining himself to a preconceived scheme, Ammianus lists the objections which he had already raised, particularly in the books about Julian's conduct as Augustus. As regards content this section is more gripping than the previous one, because critical comments, coming from a professed admirer, tend to be more surprising and more informative than compliments. Evidently, the author found it quite difficult to write these paragraphs. He repeatedly interrupts his indictment with extenuating remarks. He does his best in the run-up to his criticism of the so-called *Berufsverbot*, in which Julian had forbidden Christian grammarians and rhetors to teach, 25.4.19: *aestimari poterat, ut ipse aiebat, vetus illa Iustitia ... eo imperante redisse rursus ad terras, ni quaedam ad arbitrium agens interdum ostenderet se dissimilem sui*.³

The pericope about the *vitia* is followed by a short paragraphs about the *forma*, Julian's looks. Here Ammianus aims at more than merely satisfying the reader's curiosity. He is knowledgeable about physiognomy and uses the portrait to complement the character description. At the very moment when the youthful Julian is introduced to the troops in Gaul we read, 15.18.16: *cuius oculos cum venustate terribiles ... diu multumque contuentes, qui futurus sit, colligebant velut scrutatis veteribus libris*.⁴ According to the physiognomical handbooks such eyes show intelligence, inquisitiveness and love for the arts and the sciences, just as the well-proportioned figure of the emperor points to bravery.⁵

The necrology ends with a defence against the allegation that Julian was responsible for the fact that the relations with Persia had deterio-

³ 'one might think that the ancient goddess of Justice, as he himself said ... during his reign had returned to earth, except that in some cases he acted arbitrarily, and thus sometimes denied his own nature'.

⁴ 'while the soldiers looked long and hard at his eyes, which were both appealing and frightening, they tried to deduce from this what sort of a person he would be, as if they were studying old books.'

⁵ The Greek and Latin physiognomical treatises have been published by Foerster 1893. A recent study is Vogt 1999.

rated, which in the end led to the fatal expedition. Ammianus puts the blame decisively on Julian's great-uncle, Constantine the Great, for reasons which I will not go into. Again he emphasizes forcefully that after his successes in Gaul, by which he had protected the West of the empire against the invasions of the Germans, Julian was the obvious person to deal once and for all with the other arch-enemy in the East, Persia.⁶

Problematic issues

After this survey of the necrology as a whole I ask your attention for a few of its components. First of all its opening sentence, the title of my lecture: 'A man who has to be counted as one of the heroic characters'. This is a panegyric statement, which calls to mind the sentence with which Ammianus introduced Julian in 16.1.3: *quidquid ... narrabitur ... ad laudativam paene materiam pertinebit*.⁷ Regarding the phrasing my attention was primarily drawn to the verb *connumerare*. It occurs only here in Ammianus and is fairly rare in Latin as a whole, as is clear from the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. In such cases one does well to remember that Ammianus is bilingual. His mother tongue is Greek, but as an officer in the army, where Latin was mandatory, he learnt the language thoroughly and chose to address a Roman public. Although Ammianus is fluent in Latin, Greek occasionally shows through. I have the impression that *connumerare* is a loan translation of συναριθμεῖν, a verb which according to the Greek *Thesaurus* appears at least a thousand times, and with particular frequency in fourth century texts. When I examined these cases I was struck by the fact that in the Greek translation of Eutropius, Ammianus' contemporary, and author of a *breviarium*, συναριθμεῖν is used invariably to indicate the *consecratio* of the emperor, as a translation of *inter divos relatus est*: συνηριθμήθη τοῖς θεοῖς. Strangely enough Ammianus does *not* use the verb for the consecration although Eutropius tells us explicitly that it did take place. To explain his reticence in this respect it has been suggested that Ammianus glossed over this issue for tactical reasons, because he wrote during the reign of the ultra-Christian Theodosius. I am not convinced. Ammianus does

⁶ About the consolidation of the Western frontier Julian's greatest biographer, the Walloon scholar Joseph Bidez, makes the subtle remark that we have Julian's successes to thank for the fact that the Romance-German linguistic frontier is where it is, and not much further to the south.

⁷ 'everything that will be related will all but belong to the field of panegyric'.

not mention the consecration for any of the five emperors whom he laid to rest in his work, yet it is attested for all five of them by other sources. The remarkable phrasing used by Ammianus fits in with his tendency to pay scant attention to the sacred side of imperial rule. Moreover, in Ammianus the adjective *herous/heroicus* always refers to the epos and to the Homeric heroes. This means that Ammianus puts the emperor on a par with those heroes, as is usual in panegyric texts; he had done this previously in his work. However, it goes far too far to say, as Barnes (1998, 147) did in his recent book about Ammianus, that ‘the concealed image of Achilles ... underlies the whole of Ammianus’ account of Julian’. The places he quotes are too vague and too few to corroborate this statement. It is a typical aperçu; one needs a bit of discipline not to write it down. In this way a lexicographical question about the use of *connumerare* has made us aware of an important aspect of Ammianus’ views about emperors in general and about Julian in particular.

Whilst writing our commentary on Ammianus we are frequently faced with problems to do with textual criticism. For the actual text we have to rely almost exclusively on manuscript V, which is in the Vatican library. The Teubner edition, which we have chosen as our text, reproduces the readings of this manuscript with great accuracy as we have verified ourselves. Sadly, the manuscript is very corrupt. One can say without exaggerating that on each page there are at least ten mistakes. When we compare the Teubner edition with the manuscript we have to admire the enormous ingenuity with which scholars, particularly from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, have created a fairly legible text on the basis of this manuscript. In comparison with the editors of the Teubner edition, and certainly those of the recently completed Budé edition, we tend to be less conservative. Exaggerated reverence for the readings of V seems inappropriate when we take into account its poor quality. I would love to present you with a nice example of an emendation proposed by us, but there is none in this chapter. Instead I present you with a crux. Who knows, one of you might suddenly see the light. I have already indicated the content of the first sentence about Julian’s *castitas*. Ammianus puts it as follows, 25.4.2: *et primum ita inviolata castitate enituit, ut post amissam coniugem nihil umquam venerium ꝑaugis larens*.⁸ Most scholars who have attempted to remedy this propose a

⁸ ‘he excelled in so pure a chastity that after having lost his wife he never had anything to do with sensuality *augis larens*’.

form of a verb with Julian as the subject, e.g. *agitare*, *attingere*, *gustare*, *usurpare*, all verbs which Ammianus does not use for this kind of activity. Walter's approach seems much better to me; he suspected that *aug.* was an abbreviation of *augustus*, and conjectured *augusti viserent lares*. The expression *augusti lares* appears in Ammianus' contemporary Claudianus to indicate the court of the emperor. In our commentary we have said that the crux should remain, to be on the safe side.

Julian's vitia: levitas and curiositas

As has been said before, the section about the emperor's bad qualities is more informative than the somewhat sketchy enumeration of his virtues. For that reason I want to spend a bit more time on those paragraphs. The opening sentence is as follows, 25.4.16: *digestis bonis, quae scire potuimus, nunc ad explicanda eius vitia veniamus, licet dicta sint carptim*.⁹ To interpret these words it is important to realize that Ammianus marks the transition in the necrology of Constantius with practically the same words (21.16). Ammianus indicates by this extremely close correspondence between both texts that the two necrologies should be read side by side.

The first characteristic which is condemned by Ammianus is Julian's *levitas*, in other words his lack of *gravitas*, Roman style and reticence. In this respect he is inferior to his predecessor, who 'always considered the buskin of imperial dignity' (21.16.1; Ammianus' use of metaphors is not always felicitous). Julian behaved like a young student convinced of his own brilliance.¹⁰ He talked non-stop and could not be silenced. No wonder then, that surly eunuchs at the court in Milan did not appreciate the antics of the scholarly recluse, thrust into the role of a general, and that they spoke sneeringly of 'the garrulous mole' and the 'monkey clad in purple'.¹¹ Ammianus explains and excuses this characteristic by pointing out that Julian originated from the eastern half of the empire, and he adds straightaway that the emperor found it totally acceptable to be rebuked.

The second reproach seems more serious, that the emperor was

⁹ 'now that we have dealt with the good qualities, which we have been able to discover, we will move on to the discussion of his faults, even if they have to be dealt with briefly'. The translation blurs the problem of the perfect *dicta sint*: there is extensive commentary on this *ad loc.*

¹⁰ See for the portrait of Julian by St Gregory of Nazianzus in chapter 19 of this book, on p. 222 (note eds.).

¹¹ 17.11.1 *appellantes 'loquacem talpam' et 'purpuratam simiam'*.

without moderation in respect of divination. Ammianus was decidedly not sceptical with regard to the possibility of reading the future. He was firmly convinced of this and argued in a lengthy and essential digression in 21.1.7-14 that *divinatio* was a most important branch of science: *doctrinae genus haud leve*. He voices his objection with the word *nimiae*. The emperor went too far in this respect. To understand this fully we have to return to the description of Julian's stay in Antioch, which Ammianus had given in detail in book 22. What had been summarized here in one sentence is discussed in detail in 22.12.7. There Ammianus voices his disapproval about the fact that everybody in Julian's entourage, whether qualified or not, avidly exploited the liberty to devote himself to *divinatio*, something which had been strictly forbidden under Julian's predecessor, the Christian Constantius. This meant that, according to the author, divination was practiced in an uncontrolled and lawless way *affectata varietate*, that is to say with overzealous efforts to practice all forms of *divinatio*. In the necrology Ammianus compares Julian to Hadrian in this respect. By doing so he harks back again to his description of Julian in Antioch, where Julian is characterized in this context as *multorum curiosior*. As we have pointed out in the commentary *ad locum*, *multorum* betrays the fact that Ammianus had in mind the Greek notion of πολυπραγμοσύνη, a quality rendered in Latin with *curiositas* and defined by Plutarch in a treatise about this subject as excessive curiosity regarding all that is hidden and inaccessible for man (ἀπόρρητα).¹² St Augustine uses the term *curiositas* in a most remarkable statement about Julian in *De civitate Dei*, 5.21: *Iuliano, cuius egregiam indolem decepit amore dominandi sacrilega et detestanda curiositas*.¹³ It is clear that 'curiosity' would be too innocent a translation for this notion. Pauw, who wrote a thesis on 'Characterization in Ammianus' in 1972, considers the comparison with Hadrian, and a bit further (see Pauw 1977) on with Marcus Aurelius, to be a sort of justification. In this case, Julian may have been plagued by *curiositas*, but he shared this vice with a great predecessor. In the case of Marcus Aurelius this idea appeals to me, because Julian saw him as his great example. But Hadrian's image is always somewhat ambivalent. In this context it is interesting that Julian characterizes Hadrian in his satire *Caesares* or *Symposium* as a philosopher, an astrologer and as πολυπραγμονῶν τὰ ἀπόρρητα.

¹² Plut. *De curiositate* 6.518 c ἔστι γὰρ πολυπραγμοσύνη φιλοπευστία τῶν ἐν ἀποκρύψει καὶ λανθανόντων.

¹³ 'who, with his exceptional talents (nota bene!) because of his desire to rule was led astray by his ungodly and wicked *curiositas*'.

Superstitio

The next keyword in the indictment is *superstitio*. In his extensive review of our commentaries in *L'Antiquité Tardive*, Paschoud (2002, 421-5) wonders what it is like for four people to work on one book. Do we always agree about everything? He puts it this way: 'Le lecteur est-il invité à croire que, guidés par le Saint Esprit comme les traducteurs grecs de la Septante, ils sont en parfait accord sur chacun des innombrables points traités?' The answer is that so far, thanks to well-defined arrangements with regard to the division of labour, and thanks to a great willingness to give and take, we have managed without much trouble to produce a text which everyone was able to agree with. But Den Boeft and I do not quite agree about the following issue. The relevant text is as follows, 25.4.17:

superstitiosus magis quam sacrorum legitimus observator, innumeras sine parsimonia pecudes mactans, ut aestimaretur, si revertisset de Parthis, boves iam defuturos, Marci illius similis Caesaris, in quem id accipimus dictum:

οἱ βόες οἱ λευκοὶ Μάρκῳ τῷ Καίσαρι χαίρειν.

ἀν' πάλι νικήσης ἄμμες ἀπώλόμεθα.¹⁴

To interpret this accusation correctly we have to take into consideration once again the necrology of Constantius. For although Constantius was a Christian and Julian a heathen, Ammianus levels exactly the same criticism at both. Constantius is also charged with *superstitio*, 21.16.18: *Christianam religionem absolutam et simplicem anili superstitione confundens, in qua scrutanda perplexius quam componenda gravius excitavit discidia plurima*.¹⁵ The parallelism between the two passages leaps out. The charge of *superstitio* is in both cases followed by a statement which conveys what the emperor did and did not do. Julian sacrificed numerous animals instead of observing the existing rules concerning sacrificial practices. Constantius lost himself in theological quibbling instead

¹⁴ 'he was *superstitiosus* (English has no equivalent) rather than that he observed the rules regarding sacrifice by slaughtering numerous sacrificial animals without any restraint, so that people assumed that on his return from Persia cattle would soon be in short supply. In this respect he was like the great emperor Marcus, of whom we read that he was lampooned in the following poem: "The white bulls greet emperor Marcus. If you are victorious one more time, we are finished"'.¹⁵

¹⁵ 'the Christian religion, which is transparent and unambiguous, he obscured with his old wives' *superstitio*. By trying to unravel all these details rather than bridging the differences by using his authority, he caused many controversies'.

of using his authority to reconcile the religious differences.

In Antiquity various authors have given divergent definitions of the concept *superstitio*, and it is important to establish what precisely its meaning was for Ammianus, in order to be able to assess the seriousness of his accusation against Constantius and Julian. In an article with the title 'Ammianus Marcellinus' judgement of Julian's piety', Den Boeft (2008, 65-79) reviews a number of interpretations of this concept by Christian and pagan authors, amongst which that of Cicero in *De inventione* 2.165. Cicero argues there that one should not only condemn characteristics which are the opposite of virtues, for example cowardice as opposed to courage, but also characteristics which are related to virtues. He gives three examples: recklessness as an excrescence of bravery, stubbornness as an excrescence of resolve, and *superstitio* as an excrescence of *religio*. In the opinion of the Christian Lactantius this interpretation of *superstitio* was much too superficial, because in this way it becomes a purely quantitative concept, a matter of 'too much'. No, argues Lactantius in his *Divinae Institutiones* 28.11: *nimirum religio veri cultus est, superstitio falsi*.¹⁶ In other words, *religio* is the correct form of religion, *superstitio* the wrong one. Den Boeft seems to adopt this interpretation also with regard to Ammianus, when he writes that in Ammianus *superstitio* is much more negative than the usual translations 'Aberglaube', 'superstition' suggest. It is risky to debate this with him, because he knows much more about the history of religion than I do. Yet I cannot quite follow him here. In my opinion the objection defined by Ammianus as *superstitio* should be interpreted as an excess, as too much. I have three arguments for this. Firstly, it is imperative, because of the parallelism between the verdicts on Constantius and Julian, to attribute the same meaning to the term *superstitio(sus)* in both places. In the case of Constantius Ammianus starts with a positive judgement about the Christian religion as being *absoluta et simplex*. Ammianus does not disapprove of the fact that the emperor was devoted to this religion. Constantius went too far by personally meddling in discussions about dogma. We can see how it should be done by looking at the emperor Valentinian (also a Christian) of whom Ammianus says, 30.9.5: *inter religionum diversitates medius stetit nec quemquam inquietavit neque ut hoc coleretur, imperavit, aut aliud*.¹⁷ In Julian's case the reasoning is similar. He tried to restore the pagan cult. The pagan

¹⁶ '*religio* is the worship of what is true, *superstitio* of what is untrue'.

¹⁷ 'he remained neutral with regard to religious differences and never troubled anyone by ordering him to adopt this or that mode of worship'.

Ammianus regards this as positive as far as it goes. But like Constantius Julian went too far in his religious zeal. My second argument to interpret *superstitio* as 'excess' is derived from a comparison between the text here and earlier statements about Julian in Antioch, where we read the following, 22.12.6 and 7: *sanguine plurimo aras crebritate nimia perfundebat* and *augebantur autem caerimoniarum ritus immodice*.¹⁸ My third argument is, that the element of exaggeration, *nimietas*, to use Ammianus' word, is the common thread which runs through Ammianus' criticism of Julian. This applies to the way he posed as an intellectual, to his *curiositas*, to his pursuit of popularity, which will be dealt with hereafter, and in my opinion also to his religiosity, which degenerated into *superstitio* because of his excesses regarding sacrifices.

When one maintains that a person exceeds the limit, one should define that limit. Ammianus tries to do this as well with the words which have been quoted before: *magis quam sacrorum legitimus observator*. It can help our understanding when we compare this with the following text from Servius auct. *ad G.* 1.269: *religiosi enim esse dicuntur, qui faciendarum praetermittendarum rerum divinarum secundum morem civitatis dilectum habent nec se superstitionibus implicant*.¹⁹ Julian went beyond what was laid down by the traditional rules, as if he wanted to make up for the long interruption of the sacrifices. Even Libanius notes this, who was an uncritical admirer of Julian; in his twelfth oration he says (the emperor himself was present!), *Or.* 12.80: οὐ γὰρ νόμων ἀνάγκαις ὑπηρετῶν νῦν μὲν ἔθυσσε, νῦν δὲ ἔλῃξεν ... ἀλλ' ὁ τοὺς ἄλλους οἶδε ταῖς νομικαῖς ἀναθέντας ταῦθ' ἐκάστης ἡμέρας εἶναι πεποιήκεν.²⁰ In short, the text of the two necrologies of Constantius and Julian points to the fact that both emperors, the Christian and the pagan, were guilty of *pécher par excès*. Nevertheless, the characterization of Julian as being *superstitiosus* remains painful, if only because it had also been used for his enemy.

¹⁸ 'with too great (*nimia*) a frequency he poured rivers of blood on the altars' and 'the rituals increased excessively (*immodice*)'.

¹⁹ 'people who choose whether to perform or not to perform holy rites in accordance with the tradition of the community to which they belong, and who have nothing to do with *superstitiones*, are called *religiosi*'.

²⁰ 'he did not sacrifice obeying the rules of the laws, at a given time but not the next time, no, he made a daily practice of the sacrifices of which he knew that others only brought them at the beginning of the month'.

Own judgement or idées reçues?

It seems that Ammianus was a somewhat rigid military officer. The way in which he talks about Julian's last mentioned fault, his need for the approval of the people, is hilarious for a modern TV-viewer during election time. Julian adored applause. In his disdain for propriety he went so far as to demean himself by talking to people who were not worthy of this honour. This aspect leads me to touch on one other problem which has received more of our attention lately compared to when we started our work. There are two places in the necrology where we find wordings which resemble statements of other historians so much that one can hardly imagine that the authors wrote them independently of each other. We find the remarkable characterization of Julian as *superstitiosus* also in the anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus* 43.7 from the beginning of the fifth century, in which his *cupido laudis immodica* is also spoken of with disapproval. The Byzantine historian Zonaras describes Julian's need for admiration in practically the same terms as Ammianus (cf. 13.13.26): ἦν δ' ἐκεῖνος περὶ δόξαν ἐπτοημένος καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ἐπαινεῖσθαι βουλόμενος, ἐφ' οἷς δ' ἐσφάλλετο διορθούμενος παρὰ τῶν φίλων οὐκ ἤχθετο.²¹ It is unlikely, for reasons which I cannot go into here, that these authors copied Ammianus directly. Thus we enter the field of *Quellenforschung* here, a loaded term, for some a dirty word, because it calls to mind associations with reductionist theories about authors who mechanically create a new work although they have only one, or at the most two volumes on their desk. Ammianus certainly does not belong to that category. Yet in cases like this one we have to ask the question whether we are dealing with Ammianus' personal views or with *idées reçues*.

This concludes my remarks about Julian's *bona* and *vitia* according to Ammianus' view. The remaining paragraphs of the necrology deal, as has been said before, with concrete measures taken by the emperor, such as his *Berufsverbot* regarding Christian grammarians and rhetors, and his measures aimed at raising the number of the councils responsible for collecting the taxes in order to spread the tax burden more evenly. The author sharply condemns both measures. Because he does not want to end on a negative note Ammianus concludes with a passionate defence of Julian's decision to invade Persia, although that un-

²¹ 'he was obsessed with his fame and wanted to be praised even for insignificant issues, but when he was rebuked by his friends because of his faults he did not mind'.

dertaking ended disastrously. Here the author tries to come to terms with what for him was the greatest mystery in the history which he dealt with. How was it that this emperor, who had all the necessary qualities to consolidate the empire, failed? He has no answer. All he can say at the end is, 25.4.27: *si consiliis eius et factis illustribus decreta caelestia congruissent*.²²

Has Ammianus given us in the necrology a rounded picture of Julian as a person and an emperor? Certainly not. A comparison with other sources shows that very important aspects have been left in the dark. Although Ammianus tells us that Julian occupied himself with philosophy in the hours of the night, he does not specify the context of these studies. We have to consult the letters and the legal texts of the emperor himself if we want to find out about the concrete measures Julian took as emperor to take the wind out of the sails of the Christians and to restore the traditional religious practices. Ammianus is very reticent about these issues, probably because he disapproved of the emperor's meddling in religious affairs. But justice is done to Julian's great talents as a general and to his total commitment to the task he had set himself. Although the study of the necrology does not give us a complete picture of Julian, it does, I hope, present us with a clearer idea of Ammianus' views.

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²² 'he would have succeeded if the dispensations of the gods had been in agreement with his plans and glorious deeds'.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

PREPARING THE READER FOR WAR

Ammianus' Digression on Siege Engines

In studies on Roman warfare Ammianus figures prominently. As a former army officer, he shows a lively interest in and a detailed knowledge of military matters. His digression about siege engines (*RG* 23.4), which is the subject of this paper, serves to provide the necessary background information for the account of Julian's Persian campaign. Military conflicts between Romans and Persians in Mesopotamia invariably took on the character of siege wars, in which siege engines played a crucial role. That explains why Ammianus places his digression in the overture to the Persian campaign, although in his accounts of the sieges of Amida (19.7), Bezabde (20.11) and Aquileia (21.12) they had been mentioned several times already. The immediate cause for the digression is the remark about the large number of siege engines that Julian had shipped along the Euphrates to Callinicum (23.3.9).

Earlier descriptions of these engines in Greek and Latin are of two kinds. There are technical treatises in which their construction is explained in great detail with exact measures for their component parts. Such treatises, by Greek authors like Heron, Philon and Biton and in Latin by Vitruvius in the tenth book of his *De architectura*, which date from the second century BC to the first century AD, are collected, translated and expertly commented upon by E.W. Marsden.¹ On the other hand we find less technical descriptions of siege engines in the works of historians like Josephus, Procopius, Eusebius (*FGrHist* 101) and military authors like Vegetius and the Anonymus *de rebus bellicis*. The similarities between the descriptions in the Greek historians and in Ammianus at times suggest a common model, which, however, it is impossible to identify.

In this paper I shall not comment on every detail of this digression,² but focus on its technical quality, both intrinsically and in comparison with other descriptions. Ammianus treats successively the *ballista* (§2-

¹ Marsden 1971. The English translations of passages in the digression are based partly on Marsden (p. 238 and 251), partly on Rolfe's translation in the Loeb edition.

² See for a detailed discussion of the digression Den Boeft *et al.* 1998.

3), the *scorpio* or *onager* (§4-7), the *aries* (§8-9), the *helepolis* (§10-13) and the *malleolus* (§14-15). Strictly speaking, the last item does not belong in the series, because, as Ammianus tells us himself, the *malleolus* is a kind of missile (*teli genus*), not a siege engine.³ The descriptions have in common that the author begins with the material from which the engines are made. Next, he describes them not as finished products, but as they are put together: *ferrum ... compaginatur* (§2), *dolantur axes duo quernei* (§4), *eligitur abies ... cuius summitas duro ferro concluditur* (§8), *aedificatur ... hoc modo* (§11), *sagitta ... concavatur* (§14).⁴ In this respect the digression resembles the technical treatises of Philon, Biton and Vitruvius. It would be as difficult, however, to construct these engines following Ammianus' instructions as to make a living as a farmer using only Vergil's *Georgics* for one's manual. In comparison to the technical treatises mentioned above, Ammianus' description is lacking in precision and is unsatisfactory even with regard to essential parts of the engines. It would, however, be unfair to condemn this digression because it is technically inferior to these specialised treatises. Ammianus clearly supposed his readers to have some idea of how these engines looked and worked, and his aim differs completely from that of the technical authors. His digression is first of all a literary tour de force. This is evident not only from the descriptions themselves of the engines, but also from the vividness with which, at the end of every single one, he relates their deadly effects. The flowery style Ammianus favours for his digressions makes the interpretation of this chapter especially difficult.

First the *ballista*. The essential parts of this arrow-shooting engine, Vitruvius' *catapulta*,⁵ are the bow, the stock and the slider.⁶ The bow is mounted on the stock, which is a long beam sticking out in front of and behind the bow. In front, the arms of the bow are stuck into vertical

³ Still, fire-brands were a regular feature in sieges; cf. e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 2.81.2 *tormentis hastas, saxa et faces ingerere* and the battle scenes in 20.11.13 (*adsidue malleolos atque incendiaria tela torquentes laborabant*), 21.12.10, 24.4.16, 27.3.8.

⁴ 'an iron strut is fixed firmly', 'two beams of oak are fashioned', 'a tall fir is selected, to the end of which is fastened a long, hard iron', 'it is built in the following manner', 'the shaft is hollowed out'.

⁵ For an explanation of the terminological change from *catapulta* to *ballista* and from *ballista* to *scorpio* or *onager* see Fleury 1993, 226-39. Ammianus distinguishes clearly between them in 20.7.10 *nec ballistae tamen cessavere nec scorpiones, illae tela torquentes, hi lapides crebros*.

⁶ The drawings in Fontaine's commentary volume of the Budé edition are most helpful, although, in my opinion, they are not completely correct and at times at variance with the notes in his commentary.

cylinders holding the sinew-springs, which provide the motive power for this torsion engine. The other end of the arms is attached by the bow-strings to the slider, which moves forward and backward along a groove in the stock, into which it is dovetailed. An arrow is placed in a channel in the slider. When the slider is drawn backward the bow is bent. When the slider is released, it is shot forward and the arrow flies off. These component parts are described by Ammianus as follows, 23.4.2:

*ferrum inter axiculos duo firmum compaginatur et vastum in modum
regulae maioris extentum, cuius ex volumine tereti, quod in medio pars
polita componit, quadratus eminet stilus extentius recto canalis angusti
meatu cavatus et hac multiplici chorda nervorum tortilium illigatus.*⁷

A comparison with Procopius' description of the βαλλίστρα in his account of the siege of Rome by Belisarius is instructive in more ways than one, Procop. *Goth.* 1.21.14:

Βελισάριος δὲ μῆξανὰς μὲν ἐς τοὺς πύργους ἐτίθετο, ἃς καλοῦσι
βαλλίστρας. τόξου δὲ σχῆμα ἔχουσιν αἱ μηχαναὶ αὗται, ἔνερθεν τε
αὐτοῦ κοίλη τις ξυλίνη κεραία προὔχει, αὐτὴ μὲν χαλαρὰ ἡρτημένη,
σιδηρᾷ δὲ εὐθείᾳ τινὶ ἐπικεκλιμένη.⁸

Procopius mentions the bow first, whereas Ammianus refers to it only implicitly. Moreover, Procopius makes a clear distinction between the slider, the ξυλίνη κεραία, moving freely on top of the stock, and the stock itself, the σιδηρᾷ εὐθείᾳ (sc. κεραία), which makes his description distinctly superior to that of Ammianus. The term used by Procopius for the stock, σιδηρᾷ εὐθείᾳ, makes it practically certain that in Ammianus too the *ferrum* indicates the stock of the *ballista*, pace Marsden, who gives it a totally different interpretation on p. 238 note 1. Strange though the choice of *stilus* ('spike') for the slider may seem, it corresponds exactly to Procopius' κεραία, just as προὔχει matches *eminet*.

⁷ 'an iron strut is fixed firmly between two little posts; it is sizeable and stretches out like a rather large ruler. From a well-finished joint in this which a smooth portion in the middle forms, a rectangular beam emerges rather a long way, fitted with a straight narrow-channelled groove, and bound in the complex chordage of twisted sinews.'

⁸ 'but Belisarius placed upon the towers engines which they call 'ballistae'. Now these engines have the form of a bow, but on the under side of them a grooved wooden shaft projects; this shaft is so fitted to the bow that it is free to move, and rests on a straight iron bed.' The parallel passage in Procopius was pointed out by Brok 1977.

Ammianus' description of the way in which the slider is fastened to the stock is baffling. The slider sticks out, he tells us, from a *volumen teres*, which can only be understood as a semi-cylindrical groove in the stock, into which it is dovetailed. The reading *pars*, quoted above, was conjectured by Wagner for V's *ars*. As it seems a priori unlikely that, in a technical description like this, *politus* should have any but its literal meaning 'polished, finished', Fontaine's defence of *ars polita* as meaning 'une technique raffinée' is unconvincing.⁹ The question is then what is meant by this exasperatingly vague phrase, a perfect illustration of Horace's *brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*. If *componere* is taken in its literal meaning 'to put together', the phrase could mean that the semi-cylindrical groove within which the slider moves is part of a well-polished central component of the stock, stuck between two other components to its right and left, which, incidentally, would simplify the construction of such a groove considerably. It is to be noted that in Vitruvius' description of the arrow-shooting *catapulta* (10.10.4), the groove for the slider is constructed by fastening two strips (the *regulae*) to the right and left of the case, leaving room in between serving as the female dovetail into which the male dovetail of the slider is inserted. If this interpretation of *componere* is correct, *pars polita* refers to the polished central part of the stock.

The connection between the slider and the bow is not described with any precision either. Ammianus just says that the two are fastened by 'this complex chordage of twisted sinews',¹⁰ without explaining whether he means the sinews in the sinew-springs, the bowstrings or both. His description of the way in which the engine is operated is much better. The marksman, carefully fitting the arrow in its groove¹¹ and the young men turning the winches drawing back the slider¹² are sketched with attention to detail, and the deadly effect of the weapon is brought out vividly by the personification of the pain inflicted, 23.4.3: *evenit saepius, ut, antequam telum cernatur, dolor letale vulnus agnoscat*.¹³

⁹ *Pars polita*, moreover, may well be a snippet from Vergil, A. 8.426-8 *iam parte polita ... pars imperfecta manebat*.

¹⁰ In Marsden's translation, quoted above, the pronoun *hac* is neglected. It is not immediately clear what it refers to. For that reason Brok conjectured *arcu*, which certainly would be a great improvement. However, Ammianus is very free in his use of anaphoric pronouns. Cf. e.g. *hac medietate restium* in § 5, and *hac fiducia spei maioris animatus* (20.5.8). *Hac* may be paraphrased as '(the chordage) that is a part of this engine'.

¹¹ *assistit artifex contemplabilis et subtiliter apponit in temonis cavamine sagittam* (23.4.2).

¹² *hinc inde validi iuvenes versant agiliter rotabilem flexum*. Cf. Procop. *Goth.* 1.12.17 σφίγγουσι τε σθένει πολλῶ οἱ ἀμφοτέρωθεν μηχαναῖς τισί.

The *scorpio* or *onager* is described much more clearly than the *ballista*.¹⁴ Still, here too some phrases are difficult to explain. The essential parts of the *ballista* are the ground frame, consisting of two side beams joined together at both ends by cross-beams. In the middle of the side beams spring-holes are drilled, through which powerful ropes are tied that serve as the sinew-springs that gives the engine its motive power. A wooden arm, the *stilus*, is stuck into these ropes. At the end of the arm there are iron hooks to which the sling holding a heavy stone is fitted. The arm is first drawn downwards and then released; it shoots forward and, when it strikes the buffer, hurls the stone away. In Ammianus' words, 23.4.4-5:

*dolantur axes duo ... hique in modum serratoriae machinae conectuntur ... quos inter per cavernas funes colligantur robusti compagem, ne dissiliat, continentes. ab hac medietate restium ligneus stilus exsurgens obliquus et in modum iugalis temonis erectus ita nervorum nodulis implicatur, ut altius tolli possit et inclinari, summitatique eius unci ferrei copulantur, e quibus pendet ... funda, cui ligno fulmentum prosternitur ingens.*¹⁵

The two main problems here are the comparison to the frame-saw (*serratoria machina*) and the position of the buffer (*fulmentum*). Marsden (1971, 251-2) has provided an ingenious explanation of the comparison. He starts from a very common type of frame-saw, consisting of two sides, held together in the middle by a strut. At one end of the sides the saw-blade is inserted, at the other end they are held together by a tightening rope that at the same time stretches the blade. If we imagine that the tightening rope is placed in the middle and that the saw-blade and the strut are replaced by cross-beams at either end of the sides, we have, according to Marsden, the ground-frame of the *scorpio*. That would also explain the enigmatic phrase 'preventing the structure from falling apart'. Here the comparison of the frame of the *onager* to a frame-saw may have led Ammianus astray. In a saw of the type described above the

¹³ 'it quite often happens that, before the missile is seen, pain indicates a mortal wound.'

¹⁴ The term *onager* seems to be more modern and less dignified, cf. § 7 *cui etiam onagri vocabulum indidit aetas novella* and 31.15.12 *quem onagrum sermo vulgaris appellat*.

¹⁵ 'two beams are fashioned ... and the beams are connected as in a frame-saw ... between them, through the holes, powerful ropes are stretched, preventing the structure from falling apart. From the middle of the cords a wooden arm rises at an angle and, being set upright in the manner of a yoke-pole, is so inserted in the twists of sinew that it can be raised higher and lowered; to its tip iron hooks are fastened, from which hangs a sling of tow or iron. A huge buffer is placed in front of this arm.'

ropes can be said to hold the saw together. In the *scorpio* it is the cross-beams, not the ropes, that prevent the structure from falling apart.

A second problem is posed by the verb *prosternere* in the phrase *cui ligno fulmentum prosternitur ingens*, which must mean that the buffer is spread out on the ground (as in Fontaine's fig. 2).¹⁶ The next section, however, states that the shot is projected from the sling when the arm hits the buffer (23.4.6: *stilus ... mollitudini offensus cilicii saxum contorquet*), which, of course, should happen well before the arm hits the ground. Experiments carried out by Schramm and Marsden have shown that the best results are obtained when the buffer is placed in an upright position.¹⁷ In other words, the buffer must be above the horizontal frame of the *scorpio*. *Prosternitur*, therefore, is probably corrupt and a verb meaning 'to stop' or 'to block' should be substituted for it. *Obtendere* (sometimes written *obstendere*, ThLL IX 2.273.72-3) 'i.q. *tendendo obicere, opponere*' (ThLL), would suit the meaning well. It is found in combination with *cilicium* also in 20.11.9 *sub obtentis ciliciis*.

The description of the *scorpio/onager* ends with a vivid picture of the artillery officer bringing down his hammer to release the *stilus* and of the devastating effect of the machine. The climax is introduced by *itaque demum sublimis astans magister claustrum ... reserat*. Matthews (1989, 293 n.17) rightly rejects Marsden's interpretation of *sublimis* as referring to the rank of the officer. He himself supposes that the operator 'had in some way to stand "above" the mechanism'. It seems preferable, however, to take *sublimis* in its meaning 'drawing himself up to his full height' (OLD *sublimis* 6b). Again, there may be an echo of Vergil here, cf. A. 12.788 *olli sublimes armis animisque refecti*. The enormous power of the *onager* is demonstrated by the anecdote about the engineer who was killed by his own engine, 24.4.28:

*nostrae partis architectus ... post machinam scorpionis forte assistens
reverberato lapide, quem artifex titubanter aptaverat fundae, obliso pectore
supinatus profudit animam disiecta compage membrorum adeo, ut ne
signa quidem totius corporis noscerentur.*¹⁸

¹⁶ Marsden has glossed over this problem in his translation. For *prosternere* in Ammianus cf. 17.8.5 *quorum legatis paulo postea missis precatum consultumque rebus suis humi prostratis ... pacem ... tribuit*; 17.13.21 *territi subactorum exemplis et prostratorum*; 22.1.2 *lapso milite qui se insessurum equo dextra manu erexit humique prostrato*; 22.14.4 *conspexit quendam humi prostratum*; 29.1.34 *Theodorus ... in precem venialem prostratus*; 30.5.1 *pedibusque eius prostrata orabat*; 31.13.13 *Decium equi lapsu prostratum*.

¹⁷ See the reconstructions of Schramm and Marsden in Marsden 1971, 263.

The *aries* was already shown in action in the account of the siege of Bezabde (20.11.11-15). Two details of that description are repeated here. *Prominentem eius ferream frontem* (20.11.15) matches *arietis efficiens prominulam speciem* and *quae re vera formam effingit arietis* (ibid.) has its counterpart in *quae forma huic machinamento vocabulum indidit*. Equally detailed descriptions of the battering-ram are to be found in Vitruvius 10.13.1-3, Flavius Josephus *BJ* 3.214-7 and Procopius *Goth.* 1.21.5-12. The resemblance between the passages in Josephus and Ammianus is especially striking. Compare Ammianus' opening phrase, 23.4.8: *eligitur abies vel ornus excelsa, cuius summitas duro ferro concluditur et prolixo, arietis efficiens prominulam speciem*¹⁹ with Josephus *BJ* 3.214: ἐστόμωται δὲ παχεὶ σιδήρῳ κατ' ἄκρον εἰς κριοῦ προτομήν, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ καλεῖται, τετυπωμένῳ.²⁰ The type of ram described by Josephus is less complicated than the *aries* in Vitruvius and Procopius. In Josephus the *aries* is suspended from a beam that rests upon two posts fixed in the ground, *BJ* 3.215: καταιωρεῖται δὲ κάλοις μέσος ... ἐτέρας δοκοῦ σταυροῖς ἑκατέρωθεν ἐδραίοις ὑπεστηριγμένης. The construction described in the other two authors consists of a four-sided building, with four upright posts and four horizontal timbers in the middle of which the ram is suspended. From the fact that Ammianus mentions two horizontal beams at either side of the ram it follows that his engine belongs to the second, more sophisticated type, 23.4.8: *suspensa utrimque transversis asseribus*.

One would expect the operation of the *aries* to be compared to the attack of a ram, but the main ms. (V) has *instar assurgentis et cedentis armati*, 'charging and retreating like a soldier'. Pace Fontaine, V's *armati* seems untenable, since Ammianus never uses *armatus* in the singular for *miles*. For the whole phrase compare the description of counter-measures against a battering-ram during the siege of Bezabde, 20.11.15: *ne retrogradiens resumeret vires neve ferire muros assultibus densis contemplabiliter posset*.²¹ Valesius' simple correction *arietis* seems perfectly acceptable and is paleographically much closer to *armati* than Clark's

¹⁸ 'a builder on our side ... happened to be standing behind a scorpion, when a stone which one of the gunners had fitted insecurely to the sling was hurled backward. The unfortunate man was thrown on his back with his breast crushed, and killed; and his limbs were so torn asunder that not even parts of his body could be identified.'

¹⁹ 'a tall fir or mountain ash is selected, to the end of which is fastened a long, hard iron; this has the appearance of a projecting ram's head'.

²⁰ '[the ram] is reinforced at its extremity with a mass of iron in the form of a ram's head, whence the machine takes its name.'

cornuti. Cf. Veg. *mil.* 4.14 *et appellatur aries ... , quod more arietum retrocedit ut cum impetu vehementius feriat* ('and it is called a ram, because it retreats like rams do in order to charge and strike with greater force'). The following words *qua crebritate velut reciproci fulminis impetu aedificiis scissis*²² are inspired by Verg. *A.* 2.492-3 *labat ariete crebro / ianua*. The idea that the lightning bounces back after touching the earth is illustrated by Bailey ad Lucr. 6.86-9 and Beaujeu ad Plin. *NH* 2.43.²³ There is, therefore, at first sight no reason to read *fluminis* with Petschenig, although it must be admitted that *reciprocus* is not found as an attribute with *fulmen*, whereas it is the normal adjective for tidal movements, and, moreover, that the notion of repetition (*crebritas*) is brought out more naturally by a comparison with the recurrence of the tides, which would also tally with the preceding words *assurgentis et cedentis*. Ultimately, however, the fierceness of the attacks of the ram favours a comparison with a shaft of lightning.

The description of the *helepolis*²⁴ has been called a 'phantasievolle Darstellung', which cannot be used as a source (Lendle 1983, 58 n.71). Southern and Dixon (1996, 161) are of the opinion that the machine of Ammianus should not be confused with the *helepolis* of the Hellenistic period. And indeed, there are indications that the word *helepolis* was used in later times with a less restricted meaning to indicate different types of siege-towers. Hesychius s.v. defines *helepoleis* as μηχανήματα, οἱ κριοὶ ἢ οἰαδῆποτε δι' ὧν αἱ πόλεις καθαίρονται,²⁵ that is to say he does not distinguish them from battering rams and other siege-engines. The same seems to be the case in Josephus. In his account of the siege of Iotapata he mentions the heroic deeds of one Eleasar, who succeeded in putting the *helepolis* of the Romans out of action, *BJ* 3.230: ὑπερμεγέθη πέτραν ἀράμενος ἀφίησιν ἀπὸ τοῦ τεῖξους ἐπὶ τὴν ἐλέπολιν μετὰ τοσαύτης βίας, ὥστε ἀπορρῆξαι τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ μηχανήματος.²⁶ His death is described by Josephus with the words, *BJ* 3.232: μετὰ τοῦ κρίου κατέπεσεν.²⁷

²¹ 'that it (the ram) might not move back and gather new strength, nor be able with good aim to batter the walls with repeated lunges'.

²² 'as this is renewed with the force of a repeated stroke of lightning'.

²³ The idea is found also in Cic. *Div.* 2.42-5, Sen. *Nat.* 2.57.4 and Lucr. 1.156.

²⁴ Ammianus has the Greek term again in 24.2.18 *machinam, quae cognominatur helepolis, iussit expeditius fabricari*. It is used also by Vitruvius in his detailed description of the siege-tower (10.16). The Latin equivalent of the term is *turris ambulatoria* (*B. Alex.* 2.5, Vitruv. 10.13.3, Veg. *mil.* 4.16), *turris mobilis* (Liv. 21.11.7, Curt. 8.10.32) or simply *turris*.

²⁵ 'machines, like rams or whatever engines with which cities are destroyed'.

²⁶ 'lifting an enormous stone, he hurled it from the wall at the *helepolis* with such force

The first part of Ammianus' description is conventional. It closely resembles a passage in Caesar, *Civ.* 2.9.4:

*eamque contabulationem summam lateribus lutoque constraverunt, ne quid ignis hostium nocere posset, centonesque insuper iniecerunt, ne aut tela tormentis missa tabulationem perfringerent aut saxa ex catapultis latericium discuterent.*²⁸

The problems really start in the next section, 23.4.12: *conseruntur ... eius frontalibus trisulcae cuspides praeacutae ponderibus ferreis graves*.²⁹ Now the Hellenistic *helepolis* had several storeys, no less than twenty in the tower built (or designed) by Diades, the engineer of Alexander the Great, according to Vitr. 10.13.3, which carried artillery, draw-bridges and sometimes battering rams.³⁰ Ammianus, however, does not mention any storeys here and he depicts the front of the tower as closed with the *trisulcae cuspides* somehow fastened to it. Unfortunately, it is impossible to imagine how these *cuspides* could be put to any use if they were fixed onto such an unwieldy contraption. The function of the *trisulcae cuspides* being to tear down the wall, they must be compared to the siege hook (*falx muralis*) described by Vegetius in the following terms, *mil.* 4.14: *haec (sc. turris) intrinsecus accipit trabem, quae ... adunco praefigitur ferro et falx vocatur ab eo, quod incurva est, ut de muro extrahat lapides*.³¹ Presumably these sickles were swung against the wall, which is the only way in which the detail about the iron weights makes sense. It was precisely the incongruity of the *trisulcae cuspides* in the description of the *helepolis* that led Brok to believe that Ammianus was thinking of the *tichodifros*, a siege-engine mentioned by the Anonymus *de rebus bellicis*. Indeed this engine was fitted with tridents and spears, 8.4: *cuius axium extremitates et frons nec non et superior latitudo fuscinis*

that he broke off the head of the engine'.

²⁷ 'he fell headlong with the ram's head in his arms.'

²⁸ 'and on the top of this flooring they made a layer of bricks and clay so that the firebrands of the enemy might do no harm. And they further laid thereon mattresses, that missiles hurled by engines might not crash through the flooring or stones from catapults dislodge the brickwork.'

²⁹ 'on its front side are set very sharp, three-pronged spear-points...made heavy with iron weights'.

³⁰ In order to be able to use these, the walls had to have openings and indeed Vitruvius 10.13.4 tells us that these towers had openings like windows on each side (*singulis partibus in ea (sc. turri) fenestratis*). The same detail is to be found in Plut. *Demetr.* 21.2 and Veg. *mil.* 4.17.

³¹ 'inside the tower there is a beam, fitted with a curved iron hook and called a sickle because of its form, for pulling stones out of the wall.'

et lanceis armatur. Still, the short passage in the Anonymus evokes a small wheeled vehicle serving exclusively to protect *ballistae* approaching a wall. We must conclude that the *helepolis* described by Ammianus is a hybrid.

With regard to the effect of the real *helepolis*, Ammianus reports that the defenders of Pirisabora surrendered at the mere sight of one being put together by the Romans, 24.2.19: *ad hanc molem ingentem superaturam celsarum turrium minas prohibitores oculorum aciem intentius conferentes ... vitam cum venia postulabant*.³² As Vegetius says at the conclusion of his discussion of the engine itself and the possible counter-measures to be taken against it, *mil.* 4.17: *quid enim auxilii superest, cum hi, qui de murorum altitudine sperabant, repente supra se aspiciunt altiore hostium murum?*³³

Finally, the *malleolus*. The ‘little hammer’ derives its name from its form. It is basically a stick with at its end a round thickening consisting of or filled with incendiary material, which makes it resemble a mallet or a club. The *malleolus* or fire-dart is mentioned for the first time in Latin literature by Sisenna *hist.* 83, so that it may safely be assumed that this weapon, like the engines mentioned earlier in this digression, dates back to at least Hellenistic times. Apart from the brief mention in *Veg. mil.* 4.18, this is the only description of the fire-dart in Latin. Ammianus mentions *malleoli* in his descriptions of the sieges of Singara (20.6.6), Bezabde (20.7.10 and 20.11.13), Maiozamalcha (24.4.16), and in his account of the riots in Rome against the urban prefect Lampadius (27.3.8).

The construction of the *malleolus* is described as follows (§ 14): *sagitta est cannea inter spiculum et harundinem multifido ferro coagmentata*. The *sagitta* is the fire-dart as a whole, of which the *spiculum* (‘point’) and the *harundo* (‘shaft’) are the component parts. Between the point and the shaft is the *multifidum ferrum*. The first satisfactory explanation of this puzzling phrase has again been given by Brok 1978. He compared the present description with the following passage from the Greek historian or poliorcetician Eusebius (*FGrHist* 101, p. 481.9–21):

τὰ δὲ πυρφόρα ταῦτα βέλεα ἦν τοιάδε. ἀντὶ τῆς ἄρδιος τῆς πρὸς τῷ ἄκρῳ τοῦ οἰστοῦ εἶχε ταῦτα τάπερ μεμηχάνητο ὥστε τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸ

³² ‘to this huge mass, which would rise above the battlements of the lofty towers, the defenders turned an attentive eye ... and they fell to their prayers’.

³³ ‘what help is left, when those who placed their hope in the height of the walls, suddenly see a higher wall of the enemy above them?’

ἐπιφέρειν· ταῦτα δὲ ἦν σιδήρεα, ἔχοντα ἔνερθεν ἐκ τοῦ πυθμένος
 κεραίας ἐπεκκεκλιμένας, αἱ δὲ κεραῖα χωρὶς ἐπ' ἐαυτέων
 ἐλαννόμεναι, ἔπειτα καμπτόμεναι κατὰ κορυφὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλας
 ζυνήγοντο. συναφθεισέων δὲ τούτων ἐς ἄκρον ἀκὶς ἰθείη καὶ
 ὀξυτάτη ἀπὸ πασέων ἐξήιε. τῆς δὲ δὴ μεμηχανημένης οὕτως ἔργον ἦν,
 κατ' ὅτεω ἂν ἐνεχθείη, προσπερονημένην μιν ἐνεστάναι.³⁴

The part of the *malleolus* that carried the fire is described by Eusebius as follows: καμπτόμεναι αἱ κεραῖαι κόλπον κοῖλον, κατὰ τὸν διεστεῶσαι ἦσαν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ἐποίηον, οἷον δὴ καὶ τῶν ἐριουργουσέων γυναίκων ἡλακάται, περὶ ἧς δὴ στρέφεται τὸ εἴριον ἔξωθεν περιβαλλόμενον, ἀπ' ὧν δὴ τὸν στήμονα κατάγουσι.³⁵ The comparison with the distaff in both authors proves beyond reasonable doubt that they are describing the same weapon, so that Eusebius' text may be used to interpret Ammianus' vague phrase *multifido ferro*, which turns out to refer to an iron container between the point and the shaft.

About the incendiary material inside the *malleolus* Eusebius is more specific than Ammianus: μεταξὺ τούτου τοῦ κόλπου εἴσω στυπτίον ἢ καὶ ξύλα λεπτά, θείου αὐτοῖσι προσπλασσομένου ἢ καὶ τῷ Μηδείης ἐλαίῳ καλεομένῳ αὐτὰ χρίσαντες, ἐνετίθεσαν.³⁶ What makes the *malleolus* so effective is the fact that its fire cannot be extinguished by water. As Ammianus tells us, 23.4.15: *aquisque conspersa acriores excitat aestus incendiorum*.³⁷ Why this is the case he does not explain. We have to turn to Eusebius and to the parallel passage in 23.6.37 to find the answer. Sulphur and Medic oil burn even more hotly when they come into contact with water. It is an old trick, already described by Livy in his account of the Bacchanalia, 39.13.12: *matronas Baccharum habitu crinibus sparsis cum ardentibus facibus decurrere ad Tiberim demissasque in aquam faces, quia vivum sulphur cum calce insit, integra flamma efferre*.³⁸ As Ammianus tells us, the flames can only be put out by sand: *nec reme-*

³⁴ 'these fire-darts were as follows: instead of the point at the end of the arrow it had a part that was construed with a view to carrying fire. It was made of iron and had strips diverging below from the shaft. These diverging strips then bent back and met at the top. Where they were joined together at the top, a straight and very sharp point projected from all of them. The effect of this construction was that it remained fixed in whatever object it was shot into.'

³⁵ 'these bending iron strips formed a hollow bosom by the distances between them, like the distaffs of women spinning wool, around which wool is wound and from which they draw the thread.'

³⁶ 'within this cavity they put hemp smeared with sulphur or rubbed with what is called Medic oil.'

³⁷ 'water poured upon it rouses the fire to a still greater heat.'

dio ullo quam superiacto pulvere consopitur. In this way, he ends his literary *tour de force* in style, with an allusion to Vergil's famous verses about ending a war between bees, G. 4.86-7: *hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta / pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescent.*³⁹

From a military man like Ammianus, one would have expected a description based on personal observation, but, as in his digressions on countries he had visited himself, both the vagueness of his account and the similarities in the descriptions found in other historians suggest that his knowledge, or at least the way in which he presents his material, stems primarily from book-learning. The power of the literary tradition and the demands it imposed on the style of presentation produced this curious mixture of imprecision in the description of the technical aspects of the siege engines and vividness in the representation of the effects of these weapons.

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³⁸ 'matrons in the dress of Bacchantes, with dishevelled hair and carrying blazing torches, would run to the Tiber, and plunging their torches in the water (because they contained live sulphur mixed with calcium) would bring them out still burning.'

³⁹ 'these storms of passion, these conflicts so fierce, by the tossing of a little dust are quelled and laid to rest.'

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